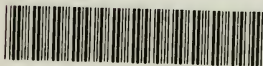


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CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS

LIFE STORIES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

Translated from the German by

GEORGE P. UPTON

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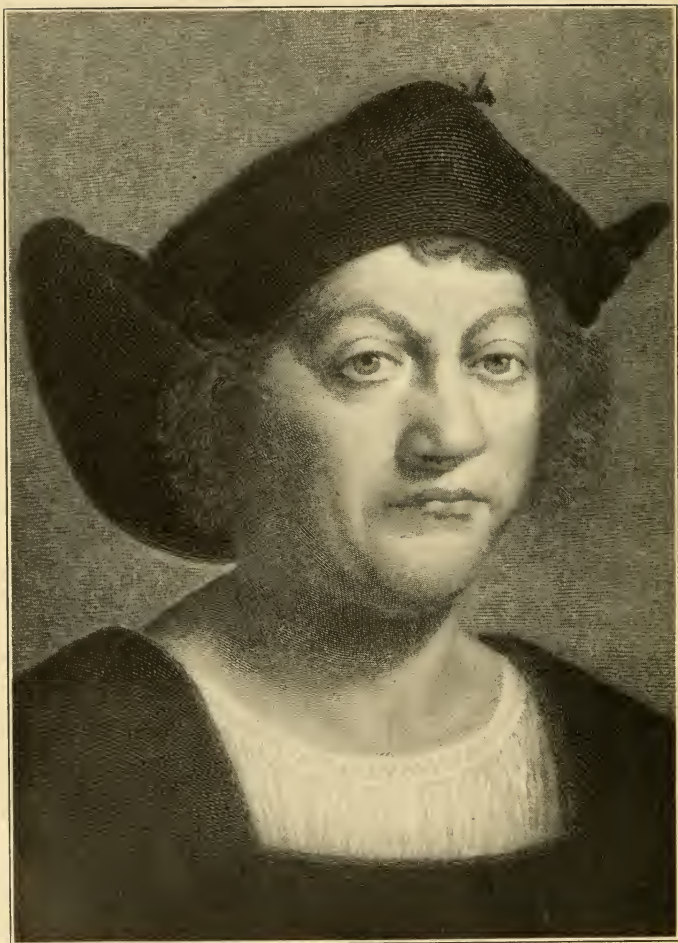
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*C*HRISTOPHER COLUMBUS

LIFE STORIES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

Christopher Columbus

*Translated from the German of
Joachim Heinrich Campe*

BY

GEORGE P. UPTON

Translator of "Memories," "Immensee," etc.

WITH FIVE ILLUSTRATIONS



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Translator's Preface

THERE are five representatives of the Columbus family more or less famous in the history of exploration, *viz.*, Christopher, the discoverer of America; Bartolomeo, brother of Christopher, governor of Isabella and founder of San Domingo; Diego, brother of Christopher, who accompanied him on his second voyage and subsequently entered the priesthood; Diego, son of Christopher, and his successor as governor of Hispaniola; Ferdinand, illegitimate son of Christopher, who accompanied his father on his fourth voyage and became his biographer; and Colon, grandson of Christopher, who was made Duke of Veraqua, Marquis of Jamaica, and Captain-general of Hispaniola; but all of them shine in the reflected light of Christopher, except his brother Bartolomeo, who, while not as skilful a navigator and explorer as his brother, was a great soldier, an experienced administrator, and the principal support of Christopher in his many difficulties and hardships.

The story of Columbus, apart from his discovery of America and his many thrilling adventures in the West Indies, should be one of absorbing interest to

TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE

youth. It is the story of a man who in his youthful days conceived a vast project, for his time, adhered to it with inflexible resolution though confronted with obstacles which would have discouraged any ordinary man, suffered privations and hardships of the most trying kind, meeting threats against his life, shipwreck, physical ailments, poverty, malicious attacks of bitter enemies, shameful calumnies, the disgrace of being sent to Spain in fetters by Bobadilla, his jealous and cruel rival, and the ingratitude and dishonesty of the King of Spain, and yet accomplished a purpose even greater than that which first inspired him, for he died not knowing that he had discovered a new continent. He supposed to the last that the region he had found was the East Indies. The great navigator, seaman, and explorer passed his last days in poverty and neglect, and the rewards which the King had promised were enjoyed not by him but by his son Diego. But his fame is immortal.

G. P. U.

CHICAGO, *July*, 1911

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Christopher Columbus

Chapter I

*Portuguese Voyages of Discovery — The Youth of Columbus
— His Arrival at Lisbon*

THE ancient Greeks were not the only nation which imagined there was a region in the Atlantic Ocean, an island beyond the Pillars of Hercules, the sea highway, now called the Straits of Gibraltar. The traditions of other people tell of a land where only happy mortals dwell. Greek poetry assigned this region to the ocean, which was supposed to surround the world as it was known at that time. The Romans also believed in this distant western land, and in the Christian Middle Ages these same traditions were carefully preserved. It was told that many an adventurer sought these Islands of the Blest but never returned home.

The seafarers of the Middle Ages must have been timid navigators for they never reached the open sea but contented themselves with cruising along its shore. At last the Genoese and Venetians, whose cities were very prosperous in the fourteenth century, because of their expanding commerce,

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ventured out of the Straits of Gibraltar. Their course, however, was not southward but north of the straits which connect the Mediterranean Sea with the ocean, for it is well known that the Venetians in 1318 reached Antwerp by vessel.

Simultaneously with these efforts of the Italians to reach the north, the Portuguese were striving to discover a passage to the rich Indies in vessels manned almost entirely by Italian sailors. The Genoese also undertook independent voyages of discovery. Two ships which passed through the Straits of Gibraltar at the close of the thirteenth century never came back. A Genoese expedition at the beginning of the fourteenth century discovered the Canary Islands, but the explorers declared they were not the Islands of the Blest. Before the year 1335 a Portuguese vessel returned to Lisbon from the Canaries with products of the soil and kidnapped natives. In July, 1341, two large and well armed vessels, under command of a Genoese and a Florentine, reached the Canaries in five days from Lisbon. They held possession of the islands until November. It is also known that Europeans stopped for some time at Teneriffe,¹ where they found almost naked but fierce natives who lived in stone houses, tilled the soil, and worshipped idols. About the close of the fourteenth century thirteen friars

¹ The largest of the Canary Islands, traversed by mountains and containing the famous peak. The capital of the group, Santa Cruz de Santiago, is located there.

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attempted the conversion of the natives of the larger Canaries but were massacred by the savages.

About this time the islands of Madeira and the Azores were discovered but they were uninhabited. The Canaries alone had inhabitants, called Guanches.¹ These Guanches lived upon seven islands, but, as there were no means of communication between them, they knew little of each other. Their dialects indeed were so different that they could not understand one another. Wheat and barley were cultivated. The natives on the islands of Gomera and Palma went naked, lived in caves, and subsisted upon roots and goats' milk, and were dangerous enemies with their stone weapons and horn-tipped spears. The natives on the larger Canaries were the most civilized and had two large cities and thirty-three communities. Their two kings were at constant variance. The warlike Guanches were only subjugated after fierce encounters, for they climbed with the ease of goats and were such fleet runners that they could overtake the hare. When asked about their origin, they replied: "After the submission of our ancestors the gods placed us in these islands, left us here, and forgot us."

Remarkable success crowned the explorations of the Portuguese owing to the enterprise and zeal of the Infante, Henry,² third son of King John the First,

¹ The Guanches were a variety of the Berbers, and of Arab descent.

² Henry, surnamed "The Navigator," was born March 4, 1394,

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who was surnamed by posterity "The Navigator." His lean, angular person hardly bespoke his real greatness. His perseverance and indomitable resolution were apparent alone in his clear, open look. He was a man of great abstemiousness. Wine never passed his lips. He spent his revenues upon exploration and conquests on the west coast of Africa. The voyages of the Portuguese discoverers began in the Autumn of 1415 but the first navigators returned after reaching Cape Bajador, for they dared not venture out into the open sea because of the breakers and dangerous ledges. Four years later two explorers, driven out to sea by a storm, reached the island of Porto Santo, previously discovered by the Italians, and from there went to Madeira, or the "Forest Island," as it was called. It was not until 1434 that Cape Bajador was circumnavigated by a daring man who had offended the Infante and by this exploit regained his favor. He brought back flowers in earthen vessels to prove that floral beauty was not lacking on the other side of the dreaded cape.

Further attempts were made in succeeding years. The Portuguese continually advanced and once brought home fish nets which they had taken from the natives to prove that the lands beyond the Cape were inhabited. Soon they penetrated to regions where they found gold-dust and other valuable

and died Nov. 13, 1460. He was distinguished for his encouragement and patronage of discoverers.

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products, which were taken in honor of the Infante. In consideration of the tremendous expense and the incalculable exertion involved in these voyages the matter of profit was alone taken into account. Naturally no heed was paid to their scientific importance. Explorations beyond the Cape at last proved very profitable and many vessels returned with large cargoes of slaves, for Europeans at that time were not ashamed of man-stealing. They hunted their human victims openly and even used dogs to run down their prey. Slavery was not abhorrent to them. They thought it natural that God should reward their man-stealing with success. A chronicle of the year 1444 says: "At last it pleased God to compensate them for their great suffering in His service with a glorious day's efforts, for altogether, in men, women, and children, they captured one hundred and sixty-five head."

An important discovery in the year 1445 removed many erroneous conceptions. Dinas Diaz in that year sailed farther south than any navigator had gone before. He passed Cape Blanco, reached the southern line of the Great Desert, and found a region green with palms, and people with black skins. The spot he discovered was called the "Green Cape." He proved that the theory that the tropics were uninhabitable was false. Aristotle had maintained that the tropical regions must be unpeopled because the overpowering heat of the sun's rays would destroy all vegetation. Other scholars, among them Ptol-

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emy, were of the same opinion. The theory indeed was so universally accepted at the beginning of the fifteenth century that many a bold adventurer was deterred from making explorations in that direction.

In the same year, however, the Senegal, which Diaz had passed unobserved, was discovered on a second voyage. The river was declared to be a branch of the Egyptian Nile. In the following year the Portuguese met with a serious disaster on the African coast. Two vessels, owing to the misplaced confidence of their commanders in the negroes, ventured too near and were greeted by a shower of poisoned arrows. The wounded explorers died after reaching Lisbon, two months later, without having seen anything but sky and water. This disaster, however, did not deter other brave navigators from undertaking further explorations beyond the Green Cape, though they dreaded the poisoned arrows of the natives more than any hardships or perils of the sea.

About this time the Azores were colonized by the Portuguese, for these islands had been so little disturbed by man that even the birds could easily be taken by the hand. Henry, the Infante, bestowed the islands upon the explorers as an hereditary tenure.

In the second half of the fifteenth century, during the reign of Alfonso the Fifth, we have very inadequate reports of the progress of Portuguese explora-

YOUTH OF COLUMBUS

tion. We know, however, that the explorers advanced along the rivers of West Africa, especially the Gambia, which stream they ascended to transact business with caravans from the Soudan. It was at that time the European world began traffic in the great and rich resources of Central Africa. On the thirteenth of November, 1460, the Infante died, and the prosperity which had attended Portuguese explorations languished. History has honored him with the surname "Navigator," though he took no personal part in exploration. Under his encouragement, the Portuguese, who before his time had timidly returned home from Cape Bajador, became bold seafarers. Discoveries rapidly advanced in his lifetime but Alfonso the Fifth wasted his inheritance. He gave no thought to new explorations for those already made were yielding him rich returns. The sugar plantations in Madeira brought him large profits, slaves were exchanged for horses, and the coast supplied great store of gold-dust, musk, ivory, and ginger. Notwithstanding their discouragement, the explorers pushed farther south. Before the close of the fifteenth century they found the Zaira, the Congo of our maps. King John the Second, like "Navigator" Henry, was greatly interested in sea voyages and the sciences. Under his patronage Bartholomew Dias, in 1486, left Lisbon with two small vessels and a supply boat, sailed south, and passed the mouth of the Congo. As the wind was contrary he put out to sea but was so driven about

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by storms that at last he found the coast of Africa on his left. He had rounded the southern extremity of the Dark Continent and, finding land, he kept on in a northerly direction.¹ His sailors, however, refused to go farther and insisted he should return. As he could not conciliate them, he began the home voyage reluctantly, passing again the mysterious cape, which he named Tormentoso, the name being subsequently changed by John the Second to Good Hope, and reached Lisbon in December, 1487, after an absence of sixteen months and seventeen days. Dias was poorly rewarded for his great discovery. He was not given command of a fleet a second time, but served as a simple captain under Cabral,² the discoverer of Brazil, and, in rounding the Cape of Good Hope during a fearful storm, May 23, 1500, was drowned.

Even before Dias had found the Cape of Good Hope an Italian explorer, named Cristoforo Colombo, appeared at the court of John the Second. When subsequently he made Spain his home, he was called Colon.³ He is best known by his Latin name, Columbus. This extraordinary man was born at

¹ Dias, after sailing south in the open sea for thirteen days, sought land to the eastward and, not finding it, turned northward along the coast east of the Cape of Good Hope and reached a point beyond Algoa Bay.

² Cabral was the successor of Vasco da Gama in Portuguese exploration.

³ Columbus' name in Italian was Cristoforo Colombo; in Spanish, Cristoval Colon; in French, Christophe Colomb; in Latin, Christophorus Columbus.

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Genoa in the year 1456.¹ Genoese contemporaries assure us his father, Domenico, was a wool-comber. Domenico had four children: three sons, Cristoforo, Bartolomeo, and Giacomo (Diego),² and one daughter, of whom it is only known that she married an Italian innkeeper. From his earliest youth Christopher loved the sea. As a lad he showed promise of being a skilful sailor and brave man. He was active and courageous, had no delight in indolence or effeminate luxuries, and despised all delicacies which tickle the palate and weaken the health. His highest ambition was to secure all the knowledge he could so as to be of some service to his fellow men. In a short time he learned the Latin language, in which all the scientific books of the time were written, and, although a boy in those days could learn but very little of the sciences, compared with what can be done to-day, yet he acquired sufficient knowledge of them to become an authority. His father, who was comfortably well off, sent him to the University of Pavia where he studied geography, geometry, astronomy, and drawing. At fourteen he had made such advances that he was qualified to become a ship captain and go to sea. He exerted his utmost effort to investigate the ocean and its routes. The saying, "as the twig is bent, the tree's

¹ Other authorities assign 1446 as the year of his birth. Some place it as early as 1436.

² Diego accompanied his brother on his second voyage. He became a priest in 1500.

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inclined," well applies to him. He determined to become a great seafarer and from his earliest youth adhered to the determination until it was fully realized.

Our young hero had his first experience in the Mediterranean Sea, for the voyages of his people at that time did not extend farther. It was much too confined a sphere, however, for a spirit which burned with the desire to accomplish unprecedented achievements. After a voyage to the northern ocean, during which he reached Iceland and gathered valuable experience, he entered the service of a kinsman, a sea-captain, who had fitted out a few vessels at his own expense, with which he cruised at one time against the Venetians, at another against the Turks, seeking to capture their galleys. Upon one of their cruises, the young Columbus would have lost his life had not Providence preserved it for high purposes. In a stubborn fight with the Venetians, in which our young hero performed prodigies of valor, his ship as well as those with which it was engaged took fire. Columbus found himself in a desperate situation but even with death staring him in the face he had no fear. He boldly plunged into the sea, clutched a floating oar, and with its help swam safely to the shore, two miles distant. He landed upon the Portuguese coast and, as soon as he had rested, made his way to Lisbon.

This event had a marked influence upon his
[20]

YOUTH OF COLUMBUS

future career, for in the Portuguese capital his knowledge and ability were of great service in securing friends among seafarers, with whom plans were discussed for the discovery of a passage to the East Indies. An event soon happened which greatly promoted the ambitious purpose of his life. He married Felipa Perestrelli, daughter of a sea-captain, one of the early colonists and first governor of Porto Santo. This gave him possession of the diaries and charts of his experienced father-in-law, and as he studied them day and night his desire to visit these newly discovered islands grew stronger. He once more went on shipboard, made a voyage to Madeira, and for some time carried on a lucrative business, visiting the Canaries, the African coast, and the Azores in the meantime.

Chapter II

Columbus' Scheme Rejected in Lisbon — He Goes to Madrid and Has an Interview with Ferdinand and Isabella, after which he Endures Bitter Disappointments

DURING the short voyages which Columbus made from the Canary Islands he was still busy with the great scheme upon which he was engaged in Lisbon. He often said to himself: "There must be a nearer route by sea to the Indies than that attempted by the Portuguese. If one sails from here across the ocean in a westerly direction he must at last reach a country which is either India or some region adjacent to it. Is not the earth round? And if round, must not God have created countries upon the other side of it, upon which men and other creatures live? Is it at all likely that the whole hemisphere is covered by the ocean? No! No! India certainly is a vaster region than people believe. It must stretch far from the east toward Europe. Then if one sails straight to the west he must eventually reach it." This was not his only reasoning. Several other considerations strengthened his belief and this one among them: A Portuguese navigator once, sailing far to the west, found curiously wrought sticks floating in the sea,

HIS SCHEME REJECTED

which came from the westward. This fact convinced him there must be an inhabited country in that direction. Columbus' father-in-law, on one of his voyages, found similar sticks which had been driven by the west winds. Felled trees of a kind unknown there had been found on the west shores of the Azores, evidently blown there by west winds. The bodies of two men had been washed ashore on these same coasts, with strange, broad faces, evidently not Europeans, and unlike the people of Asia and Africa.

Columbus carefully gathered all these facts, pondered over them day and night, and, after comparing with them such information as he found in old as well as contemporary authors, became thoroughly convinced that his theories were correct. He remembered, however, that "to err is human" and that four eyes are better than two. Thinking it unwise to rely upon his own opinions alone, he consulted a man whose learning and wisdom made his advice of the highest value. This was Toscanelli, a Florentine physician, born in 1397. He was very old at this time, but he had already declared his belief to Alfonso the Fifth that a voyage across the Atlantic Ocean to the East Indies was perfectly practical, and had sent a chart to Lisbon upon which the distance and choice of routes was traced. Toscanelli approved the scheme of Columbus and not only gave him much valuable advice but urged him to put his plans in operation as soon as possible.

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Columbus was now fully determined to set about his work but he needed assistance in his preparations. Some government must help him and to which one should he give the preference? He promptly decided that his own dear fatherland should participate in the honor of his discoveries. He submitted his scheme to the Genoese Council and asked for the necessary assistance. The Council, however, attached no importance to it, regarded him as an inexperienced man, and rejected his proposals. He was discouraged by its decision but, feeling that he had at least performed his duty to his fatherland, he went to Lisbon to submit his plans to the Court, which at this time was more friendly to expeditions than any other. He waited upon King John the Second and asked permission of him and his Council to carry out the scheme upon which he had been engaged so many years. His proposition was favorably considered but subsequently his plan was stolen little by little and he found himself the victim of most despicable treachery. The Portuguese hastily fitted up a vessel and placed it in command of another leader, who sailed away on Columbus' course; but he had neither the latter's skill nor courage and, after a short western voyage, abandoned the undertaking as hopeless and returned to Lisbon. Indignant at such treachery, Columbus forsook a Court which had treated him so meanly and went with his son, Diego, to Madrid. As his wife had died some time before this he never returned to Lisbon. Fearing possibly

HIS SCHEME REJECTED

that his scheme might not be accepted at the Spanish Court, he sent his brother Bartolomeo, who was familiar with all the details of his plan, to England, to ascertain whether he could expect help in that quarter.

Ferdinand of Arragon was the ruler of Spain at this time (1484). His cautious and suspicious nature led him to regard with disfavor any scheme which was in the least doubtful. His consort, Isabella of Castile, was much bolder, but she depended entirely upon her husband and would not engage in anything that met with his disapproval. Unfortunately also at this time the King was at war with the Moors, who were in power at Grenada. Under such circumstances what could Columbus expect from the King? Eventually he was hospitably received by Ferdinand and Isabella and was listened to attentively. Before making a decision one way or the other, however, the King decided to submit the scheme to other advisers who unfortunately had not sufficient knowledge to examine it intelligently. They interposed silly objections. One maintained that the ocean between Europe and the Indies was so immeasurably vast that even the most favorable voyage from Europe to the nearest land would take at least three years. Another, in view of the roundness of the earth, insisted that one sailing west would be going down hill and that when he wished to return he would have to come up hill, which would be impossible, however propitious the

CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS

wind might be. Others were insolent enough to ask him whether he imagined he was the only wise man among the millions of the world, and, if there really was land on the other side, how it happened that it had remained unknown for centuries.

Columbus needed all his resolution and patience to endure the ignorance and insolence of his critics, but he retained his composure and answered each foolish objection seriously. But of what avail was it? After striving in vain for five years to convince these and other ignoramuses that his scheme was feasible, he had the added mortification of learning that the King sided with them. He received from the Court the unfavorable reply that so long as the war with the Moors continued the King could not consider any other undertaking. Columbus, of course, was disappointed and had lost much valuable time, but he steadfastly adhered to his purpose. Far from abandoning it, he applied to two Spanish dukes¹ who were wealthy enough to fit up a small exploring squadron. They were lacking, however, in faith and courage and did not care to engage in a scheme which was too expensive for the King. Columbus was again disappointed but concealed his vexation and, without wasting any more time on useless applications, made preparations to bid farewell to Spain (1491) and go to the King of France from whom he had received an encouraging letter while at the

¹ These dukes were Medina Sidonia and Medina Celi, both of whom favored the scheme at first, but eventually rejected it.

HIS SCHEME REJECTED

Spanish Court. He started for that country with his son Diego. Arrived at the flourishing seaport of Palos¹ he knocked at the door of a Franciscan monastery² and asked the doorkeeper for bread and water for his exhausted son. The learned Brother, Juan Perez de Marchena, guardian of the monastery, who was father confessor to the Queen, observed the wanderers. He entered into conversation with Columbus, who acquainted him in a most interesting manner with his plans and his misfortunes. The Brother listened to his statements with eager attention, believed his scheme reasonable, and urged him to remain until he could write to the Queen and receive her reply.

Columbus assented. The Brother wrote the letter and made such a convincing statement as to the feasibility of the scheme that Isabella suddenly changed her mind and wrote a reply, urging Columbus to return to the Court. The sorely tried and much disappointed man took heart again and obeyed the Queen's summons. Isabella received him graciously and expressed the hope that his scheme would prove successful; but, alas, the timid, wavering King marred all. He called the same ignoramuses in council again and, as they made the same report, he would hear nothing of western voyages and notified Isabella to break off the intercourse with Columbus.

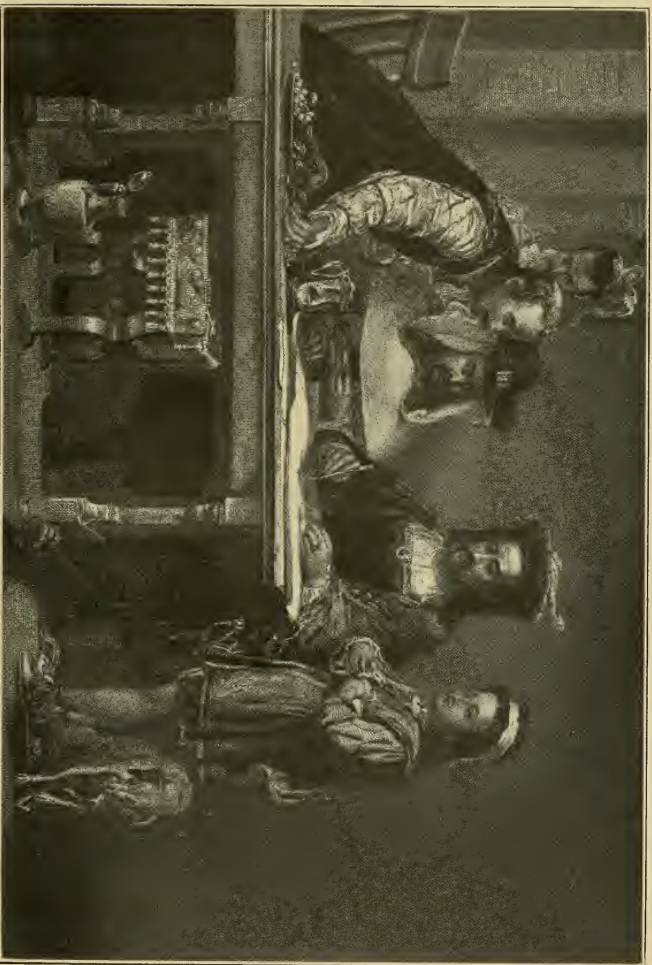
Columbus' spirit, however, was stronger than that

¹ A maritime town in Andalusia. ² The Monastery of La Rabida.

CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS

of his enemies. He roused himself anew and was making preparations to go to England and offer her King the great reward which three governments had contemptuously refused, when the news came that the Moors had been vanquished and their power in Spain ended. Ferdinand and Isabella were delighted with the outcome of the struggle which made them rulers of all Spain. Two friends of Columbus took advantage of the situation to urge his scheme upon the Queen's consideration and convince her that the royal authority would be greatly extended by it. Owing to the zeal and enthusiasm with which they espoused his cause, the King and Queen at last decided to make no further opposition. A messenger was despatched to Columbus and he was brought back in triumph to the Court, where the Queen impatiently awaited him. Forgetting all his sickening disappointments and blighted hopes, Columbus submitted his terms and when they were finally accepted he felt that at last his dearest wishes were realized. He asked for himself and his heirs elevation to the nobility, the rank of admiral, the authority of vice-royalty over all he should discover, and a tenth of all gains by conquest in trade.

It is not strange the King was reluctant to give up any part of such valuable revenues and to concede such important privileges, especially as the new country might be larger than the mother country, and the representative of the King more powerful



COLUMBUS PLANNING THE DISCOVERY OF AMERICA

HIS SCHEME REJECTED

than the King himself — but Isabella was fully determined to recognize Columbus' undertaking and would not listen to any objections. She said: "I will pledge my crown of Castile for the success of this scheme and my jewels also if sufficient money is not raised to carry it out."

Chapter III

Three Vessels Fitted Out for Columbus — The First Voyage of Discovery is made from Palos, August 3, 1492 — Columbus on the Open Sea

COLUMBUS was overjoyed at the success which at last crowned his efforts and at once began actively fitting out the necessary vessels. Those which the King placed at his disposal were so small and poorly built that no man but Columbus would have trusted himself in them upon a vast, unknown sea whose dangerous spots were uncharted. The vessel which he commanded was named the *Santa Maria*; the second, the *Pinta*; and the third, the *Nina*. The last two were hardly larger than good-sized boats. The little squadron was provided with subsistence for twelve months and ninety men.¹ The cost of the expedition was not more than 5300 ducats, a sum which at that time seemed so large to the impoverished Court that the whole undertaking might have been abandoned had it not been that the citizens of

¹ Other authorities state that the crew of the *Santa Maria*, commanded by Columbus, numbered fifty men; that of the *Pinta*, under Martin Pinzon, thirty men; and that of the *Nina*, under Vicente Pinzon, twenty-four; and that the total number of the adventurers was one hundred and twenty.

THREE VESSELS FITTED OUT

Palos provided two of the vessels, the King sending only one. At last all the preparations were made and the vessels lay at their anchors ready to sail.

Before weighing anchor, however, Columbus considered it a duty to invoke the favor of the Creator of the ocean, the Creator and Ruler of all the earth, for the expedition which he had so much at heart, for it was also his purpose to spread the knowledge of the only true God in the ignorant wilderness whither Divine Providence was to conduct him. Accompanied by all his companions, Columbus went in solemn procession to a monastery in the vicinity of Palos and there publicly implored divine help, his seamen following his pious example. Then they returned, full of confidence in the Most High. The next morning, August 3, 1492, they set sail in God's name amid the cheers of a great multitude of spectators. Columbus commanded the larger vessel, the *Santa Maria*, and the two brothers, Martin and Vicente Pinzon, the two smaller vessels.

According to Columbus' plans the fleet was to sail first to the Canaries, but on the second day out a slight accident happened which might have ruined the expedition if Columbus had been as weak as his superstitious comrades. The rudder of the *Pinta* was broken, purposely, it is believed, by the helmsman, who was afraid of the voyage and hoped in this manner to force Columbus to go back. The crew declared that the accident foretold disaster.

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"We shall be lost," they shouted, "if we do not go back at once."

"But why?" asked Columbus.

"Why?" they replied. "Heaven has already shown clearly enough by this broken rudder that it will be disastrous if we do not abandon the undertaking at once."

"I really do not know," answered Columbus, "how you have learned that this unexpected event is a sign of coming disaster. So far as I know, a broken rudder only means that we must mend it."

"The Admiral is a freethinker," the seamen whispered to each other; "he does not believe in signs."

Columbus, who knew their thoughts, realized the necessity of overcoming as far as possible the superstition of his ignorant companions, as a hundred opportunities might occur for similar outbreaks. He explained the matter to them in detail and showed them how unreasonable it was to regard it as a sign of future disaster, for God had never promised He would make the future known by signs. Wisely and mercifully Heaven had concealed the future from us. Therefore it was useless and foolish to expect disaster because of any sign. All that a wise and pious man could do was to perform his duties faithfully and industriously all his days, trusting in divine oversight and having no fear of the future. "Let this be the rule to govern us throughout our voyage," said he. By representations

THREE VESSELS FITTED OUT

of this kind Columbus, although he could not entirely remove their superstitious fears, rendered them less dangerous. Nothing further of particular consequence happened and at last they came to anchor at the Canary Islands. There the necessary repairs were made and on the sixth of September they weighed anchor and started upon their great western voyage over the uncharted sea.

Little progress was made the first day, as they were becalmed, but on the second, some say the third, the Canaries disappeared from view. They were hardly out of sight of land when the seamen began to lose courage. They wept, beat their breasts, and cried aloud as if they were going to instant destruction. Columbus stood steadfast as a rock in the ocean, undisturbed by their deafening wails, and showing such composure and confidence that the cowards plucked up a little courage. He made them ashamed of their weakness, and so clearly explained to them the honor and profit which they would receive at the end of the voyage that all were inspired by his words and promised to follow wherever he should lead.

Columbus devoted most of his time on the deck of his vessel to the plummet and instruments of observation. The plummet, a heavy piece of lead, attached to a long rope, was let down into the water to ascertain its depth, and thus avoid the danger of stranding. The exact location of the vessel at any given time was ascertained in Columbus' day by

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the astrolabe,¹ with the help of the location of the stars and their distance from each other. To-day mariners have much more perfect instruments for observation. Columbus made all his measurements and observations himself. He gave only a few hours to sleep and rest, in the meantime exhibiting such composure as to impress even the weakest of his sailors with confidence in him and his undertaking. Only to such a man was this great task possible. In the hands of a man of less courage, foresight, and ability it must have failed.

¹The astrolabe, an obsolete instrument, was used for taking the altitude of the sun and stars. It was superseded by Hadley's quadrant and sextant.

Chapter IV

*Ocean Phenomena, Unknown to Columbus and His Crew,
Increase the Fear of the Latter*

ON the second day after leaving the Canary Islands they made but eighteen miles, owing to light winds. As Columbus foresaw that nothing would intimidate his ignorant crew so much as the length of the voyage, he decided to play an innocent trick upon them by keeping one reckoning of distance for himself and another for them. He told them therefore that they had sailed only the first fifteen miles westward.

On the twelfth of September, six days after their departure, they had sailed one hundred and fifty miles to the west of the Canary Island of Ferro. On that day they observed the trunk of a great tree which evidently had been drifting about a long time. The sailors took it for a sign that land was not far distant and felt much encouraged, but the encouragement did not last long, for after sailing about fifteen miles farther a strange thing happened which astonished them all and even excited the wondering Columbus — the compass needle, which had steadily pointed to the pole star, changed a whole

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degree to the west from its customary direction. The phenomenon was new to Columbus, as well as to his sailors. The latter were greatly excited and declared the earth was out of joint, for the needle no longer pointed right. The distance which they had traversed already seemed to them wellnigh endless although their leader insisted that he was not a third of a mile out of his reckoning, but now all seemed hopeless since the needle, their only guide, had abandoned them. Columbus, whose ingenuity in discovering methods of reassuring his weak companions was inexhaustible, invented a plausible reason for this unexpected phenomenon which quieted them though it was far from being satisfactory to himself. In an ingenious manner he altered the action of the compass so that the needle pointed right again.

Hardly had the crew recovered from this shock before a new trouble arose. They had come to the region of the trade-winds, which were unknown at that time. They shuddered as they thought that if these winds continued to blow they might never reach home again. One unfortunate thing followed another. On the sixteenth of September their fear was greatly increased. They suddenly observed that the ocean, as far as the eye could reach, was covered so completely with a green weed that it seemed as if they were sailing over a vast meadow.¹

¹ The Sea of Sargasso is so named for the sea-weed, *Sargassum baciferum*, which covers it. It is situated in the North Atlantic Ocean

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In some places it was so thick they could hardly make their way through it. The sailors said to themselves, "We have come to the end of the navigable ocean. Under this sea-weed there must be reefs and shallows which will wreck our vessels. Why should we, wretched unfortunates, longer consent to follow this foolhardy leader?" Columbus again quieted them and inspired fresh hope. He said to them, "Why should you be troubled about a matter which shows that we are now approaching the wished-for goal? Does not vegetation grow by the sea? Is it not certain that we are not far from the shores where this sea-weed grew?"

The crew was greatly encouraged by his words, especially as at the same time various birds were seen flying to the west. Fear changed to hope again and so they sailed on once more with glad anticipation of a fortunate end to their undertaking.

and is similar in shape to an egg, the large end being toward Florida. It reaches from longitude 70 to longitude 40, being about 600 miles southwest of the Azores. Its width lies between latitude 20 and latitude 35. The Bermuda Islands are the only body of land within its area, they being near its northwest edge. It is estimated to be about 130,000 square miles in extent.

Chapter V

"Land, Land!"

THE hope which the floating sea-weed and the flight of birds had aroused among the seamen soon vanished, for, although they had now sailed seven hundred and seventy miles to the west, no land had yet been seen. Fortunately no one except the Admiral knew how to calculate the distance. Columbus continued to conceal a considerable part of it and announced that they had sailed five hundred and fifty miles.

But even this distance from the fatherland seemed much too long to them. They began anew to sigh and groan and murmur, lamented their credulity in accepting Columbus' idle assurances, and uttered bitter reproaches against Queen Isabella for having allowed them to risk their lives in such a foolhardy venture. They resolved that now was the time for them to return, in case the incessant east wind did not render it impossible, and that their leader must be compelled to abandon his scheme. The boldest among them even advised throwing him overboard, thereby ridding themselves of such a dangerous leader, and assured the others that upon their return

to Spain a thorough investigation would justify them for the death of a man who had toyed with the lives of so many.

Columbus realized the danger hanging over him but was not alarmed. Conscious of the overwhelming importance of his plans and confiding in the protection of the Almighty, he appeared among his sailors like one inspired with success. With gentle earnestness he rebuked them for their conduct and sought in every way his knowledge of human nature suggested to rouse their hopes and courage anew. At one time he reminded them of their duty by cordial and flattering appeals; at another he displayed the masterful authority of a leader and threatened them with the displeasure of the Queen, as well as the severest penalties, if they dared to hold back when so near the successful result of a glorious achievement.

It is the prerogative of great spirits to bend the hearts of weaker and ordinary men like wax. He succeeded in quieting his companions, and the heavens themselves aided him. The wind, which hitherto had been persistently east, changed to the southwest, so that return was impossible even if they attempted to carry out their purpose. The Admiral called their attention to this and, as many other signs of land appeared, fresh hope was awakened and they sailed on once more in the name of God.

On the twenty-fifth of September Martin Alonzo Pinzon, commander of the *Pinta*, which was in the

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lead, came alongside of the Admiral's vessel and informed him he believed land was only about fifteen miles away to the north. At the word "land" the greatest excitement prevailed. They thanked God by singing a *Gloria in Excelsis* and begged the Admiral to change his course and sail to the northward. But Columbus was convinced Pinzon was in error and would not change. He persisted in carrying out his plan to keep steadily to the west and the result proved he was correct.

On the following day a multitude of birds were seen, which convinced Columbus that they had not flown far and that they were evidences of the land he was rapidly approaching. The plummet, however, indicated a depth of two hundred fathoms which conflicted with his conviction, for the depth of the sea should diminish with approach to shore. On the following evening singing birds lit on the masts, remaining there all night, and flying toward the west at daybreak. Shortly after this they saw a new and remarkable sight — a school of flying-fish skimming the surface of the water. Some of them fell upon the decks and were picked up by the seamen, who curiously noted the long fins which answer for wings. On the same day the sea was covered with weeds, another hopeful sign that land was near. But the goal seemed to recede day by day, and the higher their expectations were raised the greater was their disappointment in not realizing them. The spirit of unrest and even mutiny broke

“LAND, LAND!”

out anew on all three vessels, and even the officers sided with the crews against the Admiral.

Threatened upon every side and forsaken by all, Columbus stood amidst the tumult of his excited companions like a lone oak in the tempest and composedly faced the fury of the mutineers who desired his death, or, what was tenfold worse than death, the abandonment of his project. Once more he employed every resource to quiet them but it was useless. They cursed him and threatened death if he did not at once return to the fatherland. In these desperate circumstances he at last realized the necessity of compromising with them. Accordingly he promised that he would yield to their demands if they would obey his orders three days longer. Should he not discover land by that time he would take them back to Spain. Great as was their anger against their leader, they had to acknowledge the fairness of the proposition and the agreement was made.

In the meantime Columbus was certain that he could not lose, for the signs of land were so numerous he was confident he should reach it by the end of the stipulated time. For several days the plummet had shown decreasing depth and the kind of earth it brought up could only come from the near land. Whole flocks of birds, which were not capable of long flights, flew to the west. Floating branches covered with fresh red berries were observed, the air grew milder, and the wind, especially at night, was

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very changeable. So assured was the Admiral now of success that on the following evening he reminded the crew of their duty of gratitude to God for their protection on this dangerous voyage, and ordered that they should lay to, as he was anxious not to make a landing at night. He also reminded them of the Queen's promise of a bounty of ten thousand *maravedis* to the one who first discovered land, and promised to add a like sum to it. The crew remained on deck all night watching with anxiously beating hearts for a sight of land.

It was two hours before midnight when Columbus, standing on the quarter-deck, thought that he saw a light in the distance. He called one of the royal pages and pointed it out to him as well as to another who accompanied him. All three noticed that the light moved from one place to another and they decided it must be carried by some traveller. Columbus was so delighted with this certain proof that his great journey was at an end that he did not close his eyes that night.

About two hours after midnight on Friday, October 12, the loud shout of "Land, land!" was sent up on the *Pinta*, which was in the advance, and all hearts were rejoiced. Between fear and hope they waited for the dawn to convince them it was not a dream. Every minute seemed an hour, every hour a day. At last the eastern sky began to glow. The sun rose in splendor and all together the crew of the *Pinta* with joyous voices sang, "Lord, God, we praise



*I*N SIGHT OF THE NEW WORLD

“LAND, LAND!”

Thee.” Those on the other vessels joined with them in their thankful outburst as the long-looked-for land lay before their eyes.

Hardly had the song of gratitude ended when they bethought themselves of the duty they owed their commander. With overflowing hearts and tearful eyes they prostrated themselves at his feet and implored his pardon. Wonderful as his steadfastness had been when confronting their fury, still more wonderful was his composure as he overlooked their behavior and promised to forget it.

Chapter VI

Columbus Discovers Several Islands, among them Guanahani, Cuba, and Haiti — Traffic with the Natives

COLUMBUS first landed upon one of the islands commonly known as the Bahamas.¹ One of them is called Guanahani, and this is the one first discovered. Columbus named it San Salvador, the Island of Deliverance, but it is no longer known by that name. The delighted mariners stood for some time and gazed with astonished eyes at a part of the world they had never seen before, now brightly illuminated by the rising sun. They could hardly satisfy themselves with the sight of this smiling, fruitful land, interspersed with beautiful forests and gracefully winding streams. Columbus ordered the boats lowered and, stepping into one, was rowed ashore, with banners flying, to the sound of martial music, followed by his leaders and an armed force. As they neared the shore they observed a great crowd of natives, who gazed with surprise at the European vessels lying together off the beach. When they reached land, Columbus,

¹ This island has been variously stated as Turk's Island, Cat Island, Mayaquanna, and Watling. The best authorities have decided in favor of Watling.



*L*ANDING OF COLUMBUS

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richly clad, with drawn sword in hand, was the first to step upon the soil of the New World discovered by him. His companions knelt, kissed the ground, and, still kneeling, vowed obedience to their great leader, now Vice-king of the new country. After this expression of their joy they set up a crucifix on the shore and, kneeling before it, offered thanks to God for His mercy. Then with the customary ceremonial they took possession in the name of the King and Queen of Spain.

During these ceremonies the natives crowded around the Spaniards, gazing in mute astonishment now upon the vessels and again upon the extraordinary beings who had come from them. They saw but knew not what they were seeing, for of all the ceremonies going on before their eyes they understood not one. Had these poor creatures known what was in store for them they would have filled the air with lamentations or have shed their innocent blood in defending themselves against these strangers whom they now regarded with admiration and awe. The longer they stood and gazed the more incomprehensible was everything they saw and heard. The white faces of the Europeans, their beards, their costume, their weapons, and their actions were strange to them. As they heard the roar of cannon and rattle of musketry they huddled together as if seeking shelter from a thunder storm. They thought that these strangers, armed with thunder and lightning, were not human but superhuman beings,

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children of their divinity, the sun, who had condescended to visit the earth. Some of them regarded the sun, the all-animating, mighty, and beneficent orb, as God himself. Others believed in many deities with human figures, and the rest were so weak mentally that they had no idea of the origin of the world and no knowledge of its daily phenomena. These poor creatures knew nothing of a God and lived in ignorance of whence they came or of what was to become of them. The Spaniards in their turn were as greatly astonished at what they beheld as the natives. The shrubs, plants, and trees were totally unlike those of Europe. The natives seemed to be of an entirely different race from them in their physical appearance and manner of life. They were of a dark copper color, their hair was black and long, their chins beardless, their stature medium, their features strange and peculiar, their manner gentle, and their bodies strangely marked and painted. Some were almost—others completely—naked, except that they wore ornaments of feathers, shells, and disks of gold in their ears and noses and upon their heads. At first they were afraid, but after a little, when they were given presents of beads, ribbons, and other trifles, they felt so much confidence in their celestial guests that toward evening, when the Spaniards returned to their vessels, many of them accompanied them in little canoes, hollowed out of the trunks of trees, some to gratify their curiosity still

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further, others to exchange gifts. They gave the Spaniards cotton yarn, which they were skilled in making, arrows with tips made of fish bone, fruits, and parrots of various kinds. They were so eager to get the European trifles that they gathered the pieces of broken knick-knacks lying upon the deck and gladly exchanged twenty-five pounds of cotton yarn for a couple of copper coins which were of no use to them. The novelty of these articles and the fact that they belonged to the white people invested them with great value in their esteem.

On the next day Columbus went ashore again, everywhere followed by the natives. He was specially anxious to find out where the gold came from. They assured him it was not on their island but farther south. He decided to act upon this information, for he had assured the King of Spain and his avaricious Court that his discoveries would enrich them. Consequently he went on board again, took seven natives with him as guides, and sailed southward. He observed several new islands but visited only the three largest, which he named Santa Maria del Concepcion, Ferdinand, and Isabella. But he found no gold there. Every one he asked declared it could be found farther south, so he remained there no longer but sailed south again. After a comparatively short voyage he discerned a country different from any he had yet seen, not only in size but in general character. It was not level like the others but had many mountains and

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valleys, forests, brooks, and rivers. He was in doubt whether it was part of the mainland or a large island. After several days' observations he was convinced it was an island, called by the natives Cuba. He came to anchor at the mouth of a large river, as he was anxious to get a near view of the people and their country. All of them fled to the mountains at sight of the vessels, leaving their cabins empty. Only one of them had the courage to row out in a small skiff and go aboard. After his confidence had been secured by some little gifts, Columbus sent two Spaniards and one of the natives of Guanahani whom he had taken with him to learn something about the region and conciliate the natives, for he was very anxious they should not flee every time they saw the vessels. The two Spaniards proceeded inland about twelve miles and upon their return submitted the following report to the Admiral:

"We found a great part of the country under cultivation and exceedingly productive. Indian corn or maize and a kind of root, which, when baked, tastes like bread, grows in the fields. We came at last to a village of at least fifty wooden dwellings and about a thousand people. The leaders came out to meet us and when they heard we had natives on board and what kind of people we were, they embraced us and conducted us to their largest house. We sat upon chairs shaped like an animal, its tail serving for the back and its eyes and ears fashioned of gold. When we were seated the natives sat near us on the

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floor, kissed our hands and feet, and paid us such homage it was easy to see they thought we were superhuman and celestial beings. They gave us to eat of their baked root, which had the flavor of chestnuts. We noticed that all who waited upon us were men. After a little they withdrew and several women entered, who bestowed the same marks of homage as the men. When at last we made ready to return, many of the natives asked permission to accompany us, but we declined, taking with us only the King and his son, who have come with us as a special mark of honor."

The Admiral expressed his gratitude to the two and entertained them on board his vessel most hospitably. In reply to inquiries as to the locality of the gold country they pointed to the east, but could not understand why white men should be so eager to find a metal which to them was valueless except as an ornament. The whites wondered still more at the simplicity of these people. Columbus shortened his stay, as he was anxious to start in the direction they had indicated and search for the much coveted gold in a country which was called Haiti by the natives.

Columbus left Cuba November 19 and took twelve of the natives with him with the intention of carrying them to Spain when he returned. They left their fatherland without much regret, for he had left nothing undone to make their condition agreeable. As the winds were contrary and Colum-

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bus' large vessel could make only slow progress, Alonzo Pinzon, captain of the *Pinta*, having the swiftest of the ships, determined to slip away from the Admiral, get to the gold country first, and fill his sacks before the rest got there. Columbus knew Pinzon's purpose and signalled him to wait, but Pinzon paid no heed and sailed away as fast as he could to satisfy his greed for gold.

The Admiral had to submit to what he could not change but, as it soon became so stormy that it was dangerous to keep out to sea, he was forced to return to Cuba and anchor again in a secure harbor. He passed the time in making closer observations of the country and the natives. He noticed one peculiarity in their eating, which at first disgusted the Spaniards. They were particularly fond of a kind of large spider, worms which they found in rotting wood, and half cooked fish, which they ate ravenously. After a little some of the Spaniards tried to eat them but had to abandon the experiment. As soon as the weather favored, Columbus started anew to seek for Haiti and his faithless comrade, Pinzon. He had but sixteen miles to go and was soon there. He arrived at Haiti December 6, and named the island Hispaniola, or Little Spain. Upon his arrival the natives fled to the woods and nothing was seen or heard of the *Pinta*. The Admiral shortly left the harbor into which he had run and began a cruise along the coast to the north. He soon reached another harbor and there his desire

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to get acquainted with the natives was gratified. In general appearance and habits they resembled the natives of Guanahani and Cuba. They went unclad, were copper colored, and were simple, gentle, and ignorant like the others. They also thought the Spaniards were not human but celestial beings. They wore more gold ornaments than the others and cared so little for gold that they willingly exchanged it for beads, pins, bells, and other trifles. But when Columbus inquired for the place where it was to be found, they pointed to the east, so once more he set sail in the hope of finding the source of this inexhaustible treasure.

Chapter VII

*Prince Guakanahari — The Admiral's Vessel Wrecked —
Forty-three Men Remain Behind — The Return Voyage
Begins*

WHILE the ships were lying at anchor in an inlet of the same island of Hispaniola the cacique who ruled that region heard of the arrival of these wonderful white men and condescended to make the Admiral a visit. His retinue was quite imposing. He himself was borne in a litter by four men, his princely body almost as destitute of clothing as those of his dependents.

The cacique went on board without the slightest hesitation and, observing that the Admiral was seated at table, entered the cabin, accompanied by two old men who appeared to be his councillors, and sat down familiarly but respectfully by the side of Columbus, the old men reclining at his feet. The Admiral offered him food and wine, which he tasted, sending what was left to his people on deck. After the meal was finished he presented the Admiral with some gold ornaments and a skilfully made girdle, Columbus, in turn, presenting him a string of amber beads and a pair of red slippers, besides a rug and a flask of orange-flower water. The cacique was so

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delighted that he assured Columbus everything in his country was at Columbus' disposal.

The attitude of the cacique toward his own people was very stately but with the Spaniards he was quite familiar. He paid close attention to everything and expressed great admiration for all that he saw. Toward evening he expressed the desire to go ashore again. His wish was gratified and, the more deeply to impress him, the Admiral saluted his departure with cannon. Thereupon he declared they must be of heavenly origin for they could control the thunder and lightning. The awe with which his servants regarded them was so great that they kissed the footprints left by the Spaniards. As the cacique's country, however, did not contain the rich gold mines, which were now the only object of Columbus' quest, he weighed anchor again and sailed still farther eastward.

All the information received by Columbus was to the effect that the gold was in a mountainous country ruled by a powerful cacique. Thither he hastened but, had he known of the serious disaster which was to happen on his short voyage, he would have given up the gold itself rather than pay such a heavy cost for the effort of finding it. On this voyage they came to a cape, where the sea was so calm they might easily have anchored a short distance from shore. He had not slept for two days and nature at last claimed her rights. Entrusting the tiller to a helmsman, he urged him to be careful, and

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went below to take a little rest. Hardly had he fallen asleep before the careless sailors imitated his example, deserted their posts, and went to sleep also. Even the helmsman, who thought there was no danger in such quiet waters, disregarded his superior's orders, turned his duties over to an ignorant cabin-boy, and went to sleep. This boy was the only one awake on the vessel. While all were sleeping the ship was driven by a strong current toward the shore. A sudden shock forced the tiller from the boy's hands. Awakened by his shouts, Columbus rushed upon deck, saw the rocks, and instantly knew that the vessel had struck upon them. There was immediate confusion. Columbus alone kept his presence of mind and made preparations to save the vessel. He ordered a boat's crew to drop anchor at some distance away so that they might, if possible, warp it off the rocks. The boat's crew were so frightened, however, that his orders were not obeyed. They thought only of their own safety and rowed to the *Nina*. Its commander, however, refused to take on board the men who had been so forgetful of duty as to leave their commander in the lurch. Columbus in the meantime cut the masts and threw everything overboard that was useless, hoping to lighten the vessel, but its keel was split and the water poured in so fast and continuously that at length the Admiral and crew abandoned it and rowed to the *Nina*.

On the next morning he sent a message to the

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cacique telling him of the disaster which had occurred and asking the assistance of his people in saving the valuables on board the wrecked vessel. The cacique, whose name was Guakanahari, was greatly distressed by the news and, shedding tears over it, hastened to the relief of the unfortunate Europeans, accompanied by many of his people.

These kindly natives did not improve the opportunity to steal but exerted themselves to the utmost to save everything. They collected a number of canoes and, by their united exertions, everything of importance was taken ashore. The noble Guakanahari took charge of the valuables and from time to time sent one of his kinsmen, who implored Columbus with tearful eyes not to grieve, for the cacique would give him all he had if it were necessary. The latter took the valuables to his own house and stationed a strong guard to watch them until they should be needed by Columbus, although it seemed unnecessary, for the natives deplored the disaster as keenly as if it had happened to themselves. In the report which Columbus made to the Court of Spain he paid a glowing tribute to these noble natives. "In reality, Your Majesty," he said, "these people are so gentle and peaceful, I can assure you there can be no better people in the world. They love their neighbors as themselves. Their demeanor is always pleasant and agreeable. They are invariably cheerful and kind and they speak to you with a smile. Though it is true that

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they go naked, Your Majesty may be assured that they are modest and exemplary in their habits. Their King is treated with the highest respect and he himself is so noble and generous that it is a great pleasure to have known him. He and his people will always live in my pleasant memory.”

When Guakanahari discovered how fond of gold the Europeans were, he made them many golden presents to console them for their misfortune and promised to get more for them from a place he called Cibao.¹ Many of his people also brought gold and were delighted to exchange it for European knick-knacks. One of them, holding a large piece in one hand, extended the other to a Spaniard, who placed a bell in it. The native dropped the gold and fled, thinking he had cheated the white man and would be looked upon as a thief.

The Spaniards now began to enjoy their stay there but in the meantime Columbus was harassed by anxiety night and day. His best vessel was lost. The faithless Pinzon had deserted him. The only one of his vessels left was so small and poorly built that it would not accommodate his men nor was it sufficiently seaworthy for the long return voyage. At last he decided that he would take a few men and try to go back, notwithstanding all dangers, so that the news of his discovery should reach the Court, and leave the others as colonists in Hispaniola. His

¹ Cibao is a mountainous region in the central part of San Domingo. Columbus supposed it to be the Japan of Marco Polo.

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decision was universally approved and a sufficient number expressed their willingness to remain. The cacique was greatly pleased when he learned that the celestial visitants were going to remain and protect him and his people against their enemies. According to his statement a savage, warlike race, called Caribs, lived on certain islands to the south-east. From time to time, he asserted, his country was invaded by them and, as his people were too weak to resist them and dared not remain in their vicinity, they had to flee to the mountains.¹

Columbus promised to protect them and, to impress them with his power, ordered his people to perform some military manœuvres in their presence. They were greatly astonished, but when the cannon which had been taken off the wrecked vessel were fired, they were so frightened that they threw themselves upon the ground and covered their faces. Guakanahari himself was greatly alarmed and his fear was not allayed until Columbus assured him that the thunder should harm only his enemies. That he might fully realize its destructive effect he aimed a cannon at the wrecked vessel and fired. The ball went through it and struck the water on the other side. This sight so amazed the cacique that he went home, being firmly convinced his guests

¹ The Caribs occupied Guiana and the region of the Orinoco and conquered the Caribbean Islands. Their descendants live in Honduras and Nicaragua. Our word "cannibal" is a corruption of "Carib."

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were from the skies and that they controlled the thunder and lightning.

Several days were now spent in the erection of a small fort and the kindly natives lent all possible assistance, little dreaming, however, that they were forging the fetters which one day would bind them. Whenever the Admiral was on shore the cacique lavished favors upon him which he generously requited. Once he received Columbus with a golden crown on his head and conducted him to a richly decorated house. Then he took off the crown and with great reverence placed it upon Columbus. The latter took a necklace of small pearls which he was wearing and placed it around the cacique's neck. Then he took off his handsome cloak and put it on the Prince, and placed a silver ring upon his finger. Not content with this, he drew off a pair of red buskins and gave them to him. With this interchange of tokens of good-will a bond of friendship was established between them.

The fort was finished in ten days and Columbus selected forty-three men who were to garrison it under command of the nobleman, Diego de Cerana. He ordered them to render him absolute obedience to preserve the good-will of Guakanahari and his people in every way and to acquaint themselves with their language. The place where he left them he named La Navidad.

After this, Columbus went on board the little vessel and on January 4, 1493, weighed anchor. A

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bold venture! In a small, unseaworthy vessel he determined to recross the vast and still little known ocean. To remove every vestige of doubt at the suspicious Court and convince the King of the truth of his discoveries, he took with him as evidence not only gold but several of the natives, besides unknown birds of various species. On his voyage eastward he kept his course for some time along the coast of Hispaniola to get a view of the adjacent region. On the second day he saw a vessel in the distance. He at once sailed in its direction and found it to be the vessel of the faithless Pinzon, of which he had had no trace for six weeks. Pinzon came on board and tried to convince Columbus it was all the fault of stormy weather which had driven him out to sea. Columbus knew this was false but, naturally magnanimous, he affected to believe it and took him into his favor, highly pleased that the results of his great discoveries no longer depended upon the safety of one small vessel. Pinzon also had been cruising along the coast of Hispaniola but in a different direction, bartering for gold.

Chapter VIII

The Return Voyage — Storm on the Way — Arrival at the Azores, Lisbon, and Palos

A FRESH west wind, which fortunately had sprung up, carried the vessels swiftly along and the joyful crews already fancied themselves in Spain telling their astonished listeners the story of the wonders of the New World. Then suddenly a storm cloud arose in the western sky. The storm rapidly approached. It grew darker and darker and the frightened sailors, in anxious expectancy of what might happen, stood around the deck watching the Admiral who, with his customary composure, issued the necessary orders.

Now the waves of the broad ocean began to rise, the vessels were tossed about, the cordage rattled, and the wind howled fearfully through the rigging. It lightened, then again was dark as night. It thundered and a tempest of rain beat upon the tossing vessels. The storm burst upon them in all its fury. The lightning flashed, the thunders crashed, the waves rushed along, the winds howled, and the reeling vessels were now hurled high in air by the mighty billows and now plunged into deep abysses. The sailors were overcome with fear.

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Some of them fell upon their knees and prayed with uplifted hands that their lives might be spared. Others stood or lay prostrate, paralyzed with fright, and appeared more dead than alive; still others sought shelter in superstitions and promised if Heaven would save them they would make a barefooted pilgrimage to some church dedicated to the Virgin in the first Christian country they reached. They were really in a desperate plight. They swung as it were between death and life and every mountainous wave which lifted them upon its mighty crest and hurled them down again into the watery abyss seemed to them the messenger of their doom. In vain Columbus sought to employ every means of safety suggested by his skill and experience; in vain he tried to encourage them and to rouse them to activity. They were soulless bodies capable of no effort while the storm raged on with irresistible fury. At last, when he was convinced that human help was impossible, he betook himself with sorrowing heart to his cabin to provide in some way that his great discoveries should not be lost to the world. Nothing troubled him so much as the thought that the important intelligence he was taking to Europe might be lost. It pierced his great heart like a sharp two-edged sword and moved him to think not so much of himself and his own safety as of some means to avert what in his estimation was the greatest of calamities. With death staring him in the face this unterrified man was still capable

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of thinking clearly and quietly, of formulating concise decisions, and putting them into effect.

Columbus took a parchment, inscribed upon it an account of his discoveries, wrapped it in oil-cloth and sealed it with wax. This packet he placed in a well protected cask and threw it into the ocean, hoping it would be washed ashore where some one was living who would open it and thus become acquainted with his discoveries. Some time after this he fastened a second cask with a similar package to the stern of his vessel so that it should go with him if the vessel went down with him and his people.

In the meantime, to increase the terror of the frightful death which menaced the crew every moment, the darkest and most cruel of all nights came on. No mild stars, such as bring hope to the despairing, shone in the heavens. Sky and sea were enveloped in dense darkness and the raging hurricane continued without the least abatement of its fury. Thus they alternated between life and death, only half alive. But the dreadful night passed at last and in the first glimmer of dawn, to the unspeakable delight of the wretched crew, land was seen in the distance. The Azores lay before their eyes but, as the storm had not yet abated, Columbus could not get near the shore. They had longed for a speedy landing but, in view of the danger, they found it necessary to hold off for four days. The *Pinta* had disappeared and it was uncertain whether it

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had gone down or whether Pinzon had taken advantage of the storm and the darkness to forsake the Admiral and reach Spain with the first news of the discoveries. At last the storm subsided and Columbus lost no time in coming to anchor. Several Portuguese came to the vessel and offered food for sale and inquired whence they had come and whither they proposed to go.

Learning from them that there was an oratory of the Virgin not far from the shore, Columbus permitted half of his men to land and fulfil the promise they had made. He himself had grown lame in both hips owing to his long watching and painful exertions and had to remain on board, but he ordered them to return as soon as possible so that the others might go ashore and perform their vows also. They promised to obey him, disrobed themselves, and went barefooted to the oratory. Several hours passed but none of them came back. He waited hour after hour but no one appeared. At last it was night and still no one came. He grew suspicious but, to learn the true state of affairs, had to wait until morning. Morning came and then he was astonished to discover that the Portuguese had overpowered the pilgrims and placed them under arrest. Columbus was extremely indignant at this treacherous conduct and, as his protests were useless, he at last threatened that he would not sail until he had taken a hundred Portuguese prisoners and laid waste the island. His threat made an impression

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upon them. They sent messengers to inquire in the name of the governor whether he and his vessels were in the service of the Spanish court. When Columbus had convinced them of this by his letter of credentials they released the prisoners. The governor, it is said, had instructions from his King to seize the person of Columbus, if he could, and imprison him and his people and then quietly take possession of the countries discovered by him. But as this could not be done, because Columbus remained on board, he thought it wiser to give up the prisoners and pretend that they had not known they were Spaniards. Delighted with the fortunate settlement of this troublesome business, Columbus again set sail, pleased with the prospect that all hardships and dangers were ended. But Heaven had decreed that his steadfastness must once more be tested.

The fearful storm broke out anew, the vessel was driven from its course, the sails were torn, the masts wavered, and at every shock of the waves the despairing crew expected to be lost. In this desperate condition, which had now lasted two days, the crew suddenly perceived rocks, upon which the old and shattered vessel was being driven. Had it continued in that direction a moment longer it would have been destroyed, but Columbus' presence of mind did not forsake him in this appalling crisis. A skilful turn which he made at just the right time saved the vessel and all on board. He soon recognized that he was on the Portuguese coast and

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certainly at the mouth of the Tagus, so he decided to come to anchor.

At daybreak he sent messengers, one to Madrid to notify the King of Spain of his safe arrival, the other to the King of Portugal at Lisbon to ask permission to come up the Tagus to the city and repair his vessel. Permission being granted, he sailed without delay to Lisbon. The news of the approach of the famous vessel rapidly spread through the city, and all who could, ran to the harbor. The shore was crowded with people and the river with boats, for every one was eager to see the wonderful man who had achieved such an extraordinary undertaking. Some thanked God for the favor He had shown the bold navigator, others deplored the misfortune of their fatherland in rejecting his services. The King of Portugal himself could not now refuse to pay his respects to Columbus notwithstanding his deep regret that by this man's discoveries Spain would greatly increase its power and secure possessions which, but for the folly of his advisers, he might have had. He ordered his subjects to pay Columbus all possible honor, to provide his men with subsistence, and also wrote a very complimentary letter, inviting him to call upon him. Columbus hastened to accept the royal invitation. Upon his arrival the entire Court, by command of the King, went out to meet him. During the interview the King insisted that Columbus should speak sitting, and with covered head, and displayed a lively in-

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terest in the account of the discoveries and sought by flattering appeals to induce him to engage in his service. It was in vain, however. He might have offered him half of his kingdom without causing him to waver in his devotion to the Court to which he had dedicated his services. After a courteous withdrawal and the necessary repairs to his vessel he again set sail for the same Spanish port (March 15) which he had left seven months and eleven days before.

Chapter IX

Columbus' Second Journey in 1493 — Several Islands Discovered — The Spaniards Find their Fort Destroyed and the Colonists Dead

HARDLY had the news of Columbus' approach reached Palos before the people rushed to the harbor to see with their own eyes whether it was true. As the vessel drew near and they recognized upon its deck, one his son, another his brother, a third his friend, and a fourth her husband, a universal outburst of joy rent the air, thousands of arms were outstretched in welcome to the loved strangers, and thousands more shed tears of joy.

As Columbus stepped ashore he was greeted by the roar of cannon, the jubilant clang of bells, and the enthusiastic shouts of the multitude. Unmoved by what would have turned the heads of ordinary men, he made it his first duty to declare that the fortunate outcome of his great undertaking was due not to himself but to God. He went immediately to the church in which he had implored the divine favor before his departure, accompanied by his sailors and all the people. After publicly acknowledging his obligations to the Almighty, he proceeded to

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Barcelona, a city in Catalonia, where the King and Queen of Spain were holding Court. Pinzon had arrived at another Spanish port several days before Columbus, with the intention of being the first to announce the news to the Court, but the King had ordered him not to appear except in the company of Columbus. Thereupon the conceited Pinzon was so disappointed that he fell ill and died in a few days.

At every place along his route Columbus was welcomed by extraordinary multitudes from the neighboring regions and heard his name pass admiringly from mouth to mouth. At last he reached Barcelona, where the King and Queen impatiently awaited him. The whole Court household went out to pay him honor. The streets were so densely crowded that it was almost impossible for him to make his way. The procession moved in the following order: Several Indians, in their native costumes, whom Columbus had taken with him, were in the advance; behind them, men carried the gold plates, gold-dust, and gold ornaments which he had brought; then followed others with samples of the products of the newly discovered region, such as balls of cotton yarn, chests of pepper, parrots carried upon long reeds, stuffed animals, and a multitude of other objects which had never been seen in Europe before; at last came Columbus himself, the cynosure of all eyes.

To pay especial honor to Columbus Their Majesties had caused a magnificent throne to be erected in



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the public square where they awaited him. As he approached them with the intention of kneeling as usual at the foot of the throne, the King extended his hand to him to be kissed and requested him to sit by his side upon a chair placed there for him. Thereupon he modestly told the story of his discoveries and displayed the proofs of them in the objects he had brought. When he had finished his story, both Their Majesties and the multitude of assembled spectators knelt and thanked God that these great discoveries, so rich in advantage to Spain, had been made in their day. Thereupon all the honors which Columbus had asked as reward were granted. He and his whole family were ennobled, and whenever the King rode out, the much-loved Admiral rode at his bridle, an honor which up to that time had been enjoyed only by princes and the royal family. But what pleased him most was the royal order that an entire fleet for a second expedition should be equipped.

In the meantime the King sent an ambassador to Rome praying the Pope that he would confirm the Spaniards in possession of the newly discovered regions and all that might yet be discovered by them in the ocean. The Pope, Alexander VI, drew upon a globe a line of demarcation from one pole to another, at a distance of a hundred miles from the Azores, and issued a bull declaring that all land discovered beyond that line should belong to Spain. At that time it was the rule that a prince could hold pos-

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session of a newly discovered country only when the Pope, as the divine representative upon earth, had confirmed it.

The fleet was fitted out so rapidly that in a short time seventeen excellent vessels waited at Cadiz in readiness to sail. The desire to secure possessions and honor induced an incredible number of men of all classes to apply for participation in the expedition, but Columbus, not being able to accommodate all of them, selected fifteen hundred and paid special attention to the provisioning of the fleet and the procuring of all articles necessary to colonization. All sorts of implements were provided, besides animals unknown in the new world, such as horses, mules, and cows, all the European species of corn, and seeds of many herbs and plants which he believed would grow in that latitude. As he still labored under the delusion that the region discovered by him was a part of India, he gave it the name of West Indies to distinguish it from the real India, because to reach it he had to sail west from Europe. The Indies lying to the eastward were at that time called the East Indies.

Everything being ready, the fleet set sail from Cadiz September 25, 1493. Columbus at first directed his course toward the Canary Islands and arrived there October 5. There he took aboard fresh water, wood, and cattle, besides some swine, and set sail again from Ferro, October 13. In twenty days, aided by favoring winds, the fleet had covered a distance of eight

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hundred miles. On the second of November, thirty-six days after their departure from Spain, the fleet came to anchor off an island which Columbus named Dominica, because he discovered it on the Sunday which in the later Latin was called "Dies Dominica," or the "Day of the Lord." Dominica is one of the Lesser Antilles or Caribbean Islands. As he could not find good anchorage there he sailed farther on and shortly discovered several other islands, some of them of considerable size, such as Marie Galante, Guadeloupe, Antigua, Porto Rico, and St. Martin.

Upon Guadeloupe they observed a magnificent waterfall plunging over a lofty and jagged cliff with a roar that could be heard three miles away. At first no natives were visible, as they had deserted their huts and fled to the mountains. At last some of the Spaniards who had been sent out brought in two boys who asserted they were not born on the island but had been forcibly carried away, by these natives, from a neighboring island. Soon six women were found who piteously implored help, saying that they had been seized and condemned to slavery. The dreadful news was learned from them that the natives of this island were in the habit of roasting and eating male prisoners taken in their battles, and that the women were carried off by them notwithstanding their piteous appeals. Columbus found that what these women and the cacique, Guakanahari, had told him previously of the bar-

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barous practices of these islanders, was true. Almost everywhere that he landed he met with a hostile reception and everywhere he found traces of the inhuman practice of cannibalism. With horror they saw the bones and skulls of slaughtered human beings lying around almost every dwelling. This and his desire as soon as possible to gladden the Spaniards who had been left at Hispaniola, induced Columbus not to remain longer at these newly discovered islands, especially as it was useless to try to communicate with the natives. He resumed his voyage therefore and, on the twenty-first of the same month, safely arrived at a spot which was only a day's journey from Fort Navidad.

Some of the crew sent ashore returned with the alarming news that they had found the dead bodies of two men on the beach fastened to a piece of wood in the shape of a cross. They could not decide whether they were Europeans or natives as decomposition had made them unrecognizable. This news made Columbus anxious as to what might be disclosed on the following day. He passed a restless night and as soon as the morning broke hastened to discover whether his fears were groundless or not. As he approached the heights of La Navidad he sprang into a boat and was rowed to the shore. How great was his astonishment not to find the Spaniards he had left there nor the fort they had erected, only some fragments of it, torn

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clothes, broken weapons, and utensils! The sight told him all and, as further evidence of the dreadful fate of the vanished colonists, eleven corpses were found a little distance away, showing the signs of murder. As they were deploring the fate of these unfortunates and considering plans of revenge, the brother of Guakanahari met them and gave them a detailed account of the calamity.

It was substantially as follows: Hardly had Columbus sailed when the men left behind disregarded the excellent advice and the instructions he had given them. Instead of treating the natives in a kindly manner they became so unjust and practised so many excesses that the natives, who had regarded these white men as celestial visitors, found that they not only were not better but were much worse than the dark-skinned men. The white commander attempted to restrain them but they paid no heed to his orders or his warnings, refused to obey him, and overran the island, committing robberies and deeds of violence. At last they began to ravage the territory of the cacique of Cibao, where the gold was found. Infuriated by their atrocities, he and his people at last took up arms and overpowered them, then surrounded the fort and fired it. Some of the Spaniards were killed in its defence, others took to their boats but were soon drowned. He further stated that his brother, who had remained faithful, notwithstanding all these outrages, took up arms for the Spaniards but received a wound in

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a battle with the cacique of Cibao and was still suffering from it.

Columbus' men were eager to take a bloody revenge but he was too wise and humane to consent to any such scheme. He tried to convince them how necessary it was to the safety of this island and the new colony to conciliate and secure the good-will of the natives. He visited Guakanahari and found him still suffering from a wound made not with European but native weapons. The loyal, steadfast conduct of the cacique confirmed the truth of his story. He also sought to convince Columbus in every possible way of his unswerving loyalty and presented him with eight hundred little shells upon which the natives set a high value, besides a hundred gold plates, and three gourds filled with grains of gold, for all of which Columbus gave him several European trifles.

After this, Columbus conducted his people to a more comfortable and healthier region where, near the mouth of a little stream, he decided to establish a regularly fortified city in which those remaining would have a safe and convenient dwelling-place. No one was allowed to be an idle spectator. By the united efforts of so many hands the first little city built by Europeans in the New World arose and was named Isabella by Columbus, in honor of his Queen.

Chapter X

*New Discoveries — Columbus in Great Danger — Uprising
of the Natives*

DURING the building of the city of Isabella Columbus had to contend with a thousand difficulties which only a spirit like his could overcome. The Spaniards, who were naturally lazy, became still less inclined to put forth unnecessary exertion in that hot climate, and loudly protested against a manner of life the demands of which they had not foreseen. They had gone there with glowing expectations of securing great treasures and had been promised an easy, pleasant life, whereas they had to toil day after day with hired men in the blazing sunshine. Again, the unhealthy atmosphere induced sickness and little by little a deprivation of those necessities of life which were indispensable to these European weaklings. Where were the golden mountains which, it was promised them, they should visit? They had no chance to go, for the Admiral was fully determined to complete the work of building the city before he allowed them to penetrate the interior of the island.

These were the causes of the discontent which increased day by day and at last led to a conspiracy

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against the life of Columbus. Fortunately the fire was discovered while it was still smouldering. The ringleaders were overpowered, some of them were punished, and others were sent to Spain to be made an example of. At the same time Columbus besought the King to send him speedily reinforcements of men, besides fresh stocks of provisions. In the meantime, to remove the dissatisfaction and quell the mutinous spirit of his men, he allowed a part of them to make an inland expedition under command of the chevalier Ojeda, and later he conducted one himself, to impress the natives with the sight of a European military force. With this end in view he marched his men in close ranks, with banners flying and with field music playing, and also had his cavalry execute manœuvres which astonished the natives who had never seen horses before and thought horse and rider were one. The Indians fled to their cabins when they beheld the Spaniards and imagined themselves secure when they had fastened the entrances with fragile bamboos. Their route lay through the gold region of Cibao. All that the natives had said about this region was found correct. The mines were not worked, for the natives would make no effort to find a metal for which they had no use, but in every stream the Spaniards found gold grains which the water had loosened from the mountains and washed down.

Delighted with their discovery the Spaniards returned to Isabella. The city was in a wretched plight,

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the means of subsistence were fast disappearing, for the work of building had left no time for cultivating the land, and sickness was rapidly spreading in that hot, unhealthy region. Fortunately this was not the first time Columbus had had to struggle against difficulties. Previous experience had increased his skill in overcoming them and the repeated dangers to which he had been exposed had made him all the more resolute and steadfast in meeting each new one. Once more he set about overcoming these and restoring quiet. As soon as this was accomplished he decided to go in quest of new discoveries. Appointing his second brother, Don Diego, regent, and placing Pedro de Margrite in command of those remaining behind as captain-general, he himself, with one large and two small vessels, or caravels, put out to sea and sailed to the west. The first important discovery on this voyage was the island of Jamaica. As soon as he had come to anchor he sent a boat's crew to ascertain whether there was sufficient depth of water for him to enter the harbor. The crew soon encountered a great number of canoes filled with armed natives who strove to prevent a landing. As they could not effect it peaceably they greeted them with such a shower of arrows that the crew had to retreat. As the harbor eventually was found secure Columbus entered it, made some repairs on his vessels, and spent the rest of the time in examining the country. Its conditions seemed to him superior to those of

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Hispaniola. He made no delay, therefore, in taking possession of it in the name of the King of Spain. From there he sailed to Cuba to see whether that country, previously discovered by him, was an island or part of the mainland. In doing this he encountered a succession of dangerous mishaps, compared with which his previous ones were insignificant. He met with a terrible storm in the most dangerous part of a region entirely unknown to him. He found himself in the midst of rocks and sand bars which threatened the instant destruction of his vessels. He also ran into shallows which made his vessels leak so badly that it required the exertion of his entire crew at the pumps to keep them from sinking. He also had to contend with the dangers of hunger and thirst, and, if by chance they secured subsistence, he was the last to avail himself of it, as he was more solicitous for his companions than for himself. He also had to struggle against the dissatisfaction and despondency of his men, who assailed him with reproaches though he had shared so courageously all their deprivations and dangers.

At various landings which he made in Cuba he learned from the natives that it was an island. In some places the air was so full of birds and butterflies that the sun was obscured and the day was as dark as if there were a storm. At the north side of the island they found the ocean thickly filled with little, low islands, to which he gave the general name of the Queen's Garden. Among these islands

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they met a canoe filled with fishermen who came on board the Admiral's vessel to make him a present of their catch. In return Columbus made them some little presents to ensure their friendship.

The unceasing and almost superhuman wear of mind and body at last seriously affected his health. Utterly exhausted and unable to sleep, he fell into a lethargy which deprived him of sense and memory. Fearing that he might not recover, they hastened to get back to Isabella as best they could. There he found a remedy for his troubles more potent than any physicians could provide. His favorite brother, Bartolomeo, who had been sent by the King with more men and supplies, had arrived. Thus he had double cause for joy. These two brothers, who were devotedly attached to each other and had similar tastes, had been separated thirteen long years. Bartolomeo's arrival could not have been more fortunate. The Admiral's illness and the wretched condition of affairs at Hispaniola required the services of just such an intelligent, brave, and experienced man and, had he not come just when he did, there is little doubt Columbus and the entire colony would have perished. This unexpected good fortune not only worked Columbus' recovery but placed him in a position to prevent the destruction of the new colony. During his absence everything had been thrown into confusion. Two-thirds of the colony had fallen victims to the diseases common in that latitude. Margrite, who had been made captain-general,

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had become a rebel, but as he could not carry out his purposes, had escaped to Spain upon one of the vessels with Buil, his fellow-conspirator. The soldiers under his command were scattered over the island without a leader and had committed all kinds of outrages. Because of this the natives had become embittered toward the Spaniards and had murdered many of them.

Such were the conditions which threatened the destruction of the young colony.

The worst of all was the fact that the natives, hitherto so peaceful and friendly, at last began to realize the danger which menaced them. Made wiser by their experiences, they looked into the future and saw, with a shudder, that a longer stay of these strangers, whom they at first had revered, meant famine and slavery for them. With the idle life to which they were accustomed, and in that hot climate, very little food was required for daily subsistence. A handful of maize and a little roasted cassava¹ were all they needed. Now, they noticed with surprise, that one Spaniard ate more at one meal than four of them would eat in a whole day, from which they concluded that it would not be long before everything on the island would be consumed and they would be left victims of hunger.

¹ The cassava is a plant about four feet high with broad leaves and a thick stem. The root is shaped like a turnip and is about six inches thick. Eaten raw it is insipid and unhealthy but when cooked is very palatable.

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These observations and the daily spectacle of deeds of violence committed by the Spaniards, at last convinced the natives they must either throw off the yoke or forever wear it. They had courage enough to make the attempt. They took up arms and united themselves under their caciques into a large army, numbering about one hundred thousand. Columbus did not shrink before the danger confronting the colony though he deeply deplored the bitterness which had been caused among the natives by the outrages committed by his inferiors. His chief hope, that these poor and ignorant heathen might be led to accept the Christian religion, was now dissipated and he realized that blood must be shed among those who might have lived together peaceably. In the midst of these discouragements the faithful Guakanahari visited him and tendered him his sympathy and help. This steadfast friend of the Europeans had already incurred the enmity of the other caciques for protecting the strangers; and hence, in self-defence, it became necessary for him to side with the Spaniards. Columbus cordially thanked him and accepted the service of his warriors.

Chapter XI

The Natives are Subjugated — Columbus is Traduced in Spain — He Returns to Europe and Suffers Many Hardships on the Voyage

WITH the two armies confronting one another the time had come which must decide for either the lives of the Spaniards or the freedom of the natives. Upon the one side were a hundred thousand Indians, armed with clubs, spears, and arrows, the latter tipped with bone or flint. Upon the other were only two hundred infantry and twenty cavalymen, supported by a small force of Indians under the command of Guakanahari. The contrast was great, but what the Europeans lacked in numbers they made up in the science of war, as well as in their weapons, horses, and hounds — that hunted Indians as if they were game. The risk was equally great on both sides and the issue of the battle apparently uncertain. Columbus attacked the Indians fiercely. The roar of musketry, the neighing of horses, and bellowing of the hounds so bewildered the savages that after a brief and unorganized resistance they took to flight. Some of them fell by the sword, others were trampled upon by the horses or torn by the hounds, while

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others were taken prisoners. The rest fled to the forest. Thus was it decided that these innocent people should bow their necks to the yoke of European slavery. Columbus lost no time in taking advantage of his victory. He traversed the whole region and wherever he went established his authority without a shadow of resistance. In a few months the entire populous island was under Spanish rule.

Margrite and Buil, the two deadly enemies of Columbus, meanwhile had reached Spain. He knew that they would spare no pains to belittle his services in every way they could and to convince the suspicious King of Spain that the discoveries made by him were of very small account. He saw a storm coming which would certainly overwhelm him if he did not take measures to avert it. The only means of doing this was to send the Spanish Court some conspicuous proof of the wealth which he had promised would accrue from his discoveries; and to place himself in a position to furnish such proof, he found it necessary to make extortionate demands upon the poor Indians for contributions. He ordered that the islanders living in the gold region should bring to him quarterly a certain quantity of gold-dust and all the others twenty-five pounds of cotton wool. This was more than the poor people could furnish. As they had been accustomed from youth to a life of idleness, it became unendurable for them to search for gold and gather cotton wool day after

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day like slaves. Their sustenance was growing scarcer each week and yet the Europeans cruelly drove them to their tasks. As they could not furnish what was demanded of them, even with their utmost exertions, they determined to carry out a plan possible only for those in a desperate condition. Counting upon the gluttony of the Europeans, they thought it feasible to compel them to leave the island if they stopped planting maize and cassava. They unanimously destroyed their crops and fled into unapproachable mountain places, where they subsisted upon fruits and wild turnips, but the unfortunates were soon the victims of their own scheme. They quickly felt the pangs of that hunger which they thought would overcome their oppressors. Some of them were swept away in a lamentable manner, others were carried off by contagious diseases, and the remainder were so exhausted that they could not bear the burdens imposed upon them. As far as the Spaniards were concerned they did not suffer much from this desperate scheme, for by their own exertions and by the arrival of subsistence from Europe they were protected from utter want. The hope of the poor natives, that they might survive the intruders, perished.

In the meantime the storm which Columbus saw rising in the distance at last burst upon him. Margrite and Buil had so belittled the importance of his discoveries and pictured his accomplishment in such odious colors that the Spanish Court lost its

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confidence in him. The King decided to send a representative to the West Indies to investigate affairs and report. This man, Juan Aguado, was far from having the ability or insight to discharge such a duty. Puffed up with his new importance, Aguado came to Hispaniola and hastened to impress the Admiral with his dignity. He met Columbus in a most contemptuous manner and invited all — Spaniards as well as natives — who had any complaints to make, to appear before him. He eagerly seized upon every charge which the discontented brought against Columbus, without inquiring into its truth or falsity, so that he might collect a mass of individual complaints which should exhibit the man whom he hoped to destroy in the worst possible light. Columbus, as we know, could endure much, but this new affliction bore heavily upon him. He resolved to go to Spain at once and make a personal explanation to the King and Queen, leaving the issue to their sense of justice. In pursuance of his plan he appointed his brother Bartolomeo as *adelantado*, or governor of the island, during his absence, and a certain man, named Roldan, to have military command. This was unfortunate as the latter was an unprincipled adventurer.

On the tenth of May¹ Columbus left the island with two new vessels and two hundred and twenty men. To make as speedy a voyage as possible he

¹ Other authorities say the tenth of March.

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steered in a direct course for Spain. He did not know how much this would prolong the voyage. He had to learn by unfortunate experience what every seaman now knows, how uncertain the trade-winds make such a course. It is well known now that vessels returning from the West Indies, in order to evade these contrary winds, must steer farther north. He soon discovered the difficulties of the course he had selected but, as he was not accustomed to yield to obstacles, he pushed on all the more resolutely. His voyage was so greatly protracted, however, that after three months he had little prospect of reaching its end. His troubles were still further increased by the diminution of his supplies, and at last his crew were reduced to a very small portion of bread. Hunger at last made them so furious that they were resolved to slaughter the Indians on board or, if that were not allowed, to throw them overboard so that the rest might have enough to eat. In this crisis Columbus once more showed that humane feeling which was always characteristic of him. He firmly refused to permit it and explained to them that these unfortunate Indians were their companions, sharers in a common necessity, and had as much right to food as themselves. By these and similar representations he appeased them temporarily. Before they had time to renew their inhuman demands Heaven itself interposed and ended all troubles. The coast of Spain was in sight!

Chapter XII

*Columbus is Graciously Received by Ferdinand and Isabella
— His Enemies Unable to Shake their Confidence in
Him — The Third Voyage in 1498 — Discovery of the
Island of Trinidad at the Mouth of the Orinoco*

SERENELY conscious of the value of his services, but with that modesty which is characteristic of all noble spirits, the calumniated world-discoverer approached the throne of his sovereign to establish his innocence of the false accusations made against him. But it was not necessary for him to defend himself, for his mere countenance impressed his royal judges at once with the esteem in which they had previously held his services, as well as with shame for their own credulity. As soon as he had shown them a part only of the valuable products he had brought with him, all their suspicions vanished and they strove to compensate him by every mark of honor. All that Columbus now proposed was granted, the rights which he already held in the newly discovered countries were confirmed, and new ones added. His most urgent desire was the secure establishment of the colony he had founded at Hispaniola and to procure as many men for this purpose as he considered indis-

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pensable. Besides this he wanted a sufficient number of farm laborers and artisans of every kind so that he might be able to meet all the requirements of the colony.

Unfortunately it was not easy to find many Spaniards who were ready to sail with the Admiral to the New World, for many of the emigrants had returned home and were not as enthusiastic over the new countries as they might have been. The gold there could be obtained only by working for it and these Spaniards did not like to work. Besides this the climate of Hispaniola was not agreeable to many of them. They had come back with bleached and yellow skins and satirically said that they brought back more gold in their faces than in their pockets. To procure men for the settlement of Hispaniola, Columbus advised that the prisons should be opened and that convicts sentenced to death or the galleys should be sent to Hispaniola where they could be useful in the adjacent mines. An order was at once issued to courts of justice in Spain that all such criminals should be sent to the West Indies. In this way Columbus conveyed to the New World many bad persons who naturally gave him much trouble.

Notwithstanding the issue of the royal order that Columbus should be provided with everything he asked, the equipment of the fleet progressed very slowly, for the money promised him could not be raised at once and those opposed to the undertaking

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put many obstacles in his way, which retarded the progress of the business. At last, however, two freight vessels left for Hispaniola in January, 1498, but Columbus had to wait until the thirtieth of May before he could weigh anchor with six vessels deficiently manned. He had now determined to take an entirely new course, hoping to discover the real Indies. With this purpose in view, after he reached the Canary Islands he sailed in the same direction to the island of the Green Cape, which the Portuguese had discovered. Immediately after leaving the Canaries he sent half of his vessels directly to Hispaniola to take fresh provisions to the colony and ordered their captains to make the voyage as quickly as possible. After passing the island of the Green Cape, which is called the Salz Island, he anchored near a small, barren one where the Portuguese sent their lepers to be cured. Upon this small island there are multitudes of turtles which swim there from the African coast to lay their eggs in the sand. These animals are very easily caught. When placed upon their backs they cannot move. It had been found that to eat their flesh and wash in their blood was a sure cure for leprosy, so those afflicted with that disease were sent there to be healed. Besides these turtles there was an immense number of goats upon this island, which had sprang from eight goats once brought there by a Portuguese. There was neither tree nor stream on the island and the poor lepers were forced to drink foul rain water which collected

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in holes. There were at that time only seven of them on the island.

From there Columbus steered to the southward until he reached the equator, where his fleet was becalmed. The sun's rays beat down upon their heads fiercely and they could find no shelter from its blazing heat. The wine-casks split, all the water aboard was foul, the provisions rotted; the vessels themselves grew so hot that the despairing sailors expected every instant they would take fire. Besides his own troubles and the despair of his exhausted companions, he was afflicted by gout, induced by his anxiety and sleeplessness. He lay racked with pain, troubled with anxiety over the dangerous condition of his vessels, tormented with the heat, without the comfort of a drink of fresh water. At last the heavens had pity upon him and sent such an abundant rain that the men could hardly remain upon deck. It did not greatly abate the terrible heat, but they secured a supply of fresh water, and, as the calm disappeared, hope once more arose in their half-lifeless breasts. They eagerly implored him not to persist in sailing farther south and this time he yielded and took a southwesterly course.

After sailing several days in that direction, upon the first of August, 1498, the welcome shout of "Land, land!" was heard from the mast-head. It was heavenly music in the ears of the hungry and exhausted seamen who had been tossing about so long. The island which they observed was cov-

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ered with three hill-tops and so Columbus named it Trinidad, which name it still bears. It lies not far from the mouth of the Orinoco River, which empties into the sea with such force that the fleet was very unsafe. The waves dashed and broke against them fiercely and one vessel had the misfortune to be caught in this mighty wave rush, and for a time was in great danger of being destroyed. Finding himself in the midst of a terrible battle of the waves which tossed his vessels up and down, to the right and left, as if they had been feathers, he had to exert all his skill to escape from this dangerous spot through a channel which had such a cruel aspect that he named it La Boca del Drago (the Dragon's Throat).

Columbus was now fully convinced he had reached the mainland, for no island could contain such a mighty river as the Orinoco. He steered still farther to the west along the coast and landed at different places. He found that the natives of this country had many of the characteristics of those in Hispaniola, only they were more intelligent and courageous and were of whiter skin. They were also decorated with gold ornaments and costly pearls, which they willingly exchanged for European trifles. One of them came to Columbus upon one occasion without any attendants, while he was on shore seeking fresh air as a relief from his ailment. He boldly approached the Admiral's camp, removed his red silk cap, and placed a gold crown on his head in its place. Colum-

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bus decided the native must be a cacique and took pains that he should be properly treated.

These Indians wore a soft woollen cloth wound about the head, and their bodies from the waist to the knee were covered with a similar cloth. They had long but well-kept hair and their weapons were shields, bows, and arrows. Columbus would gladly have remained there long enough to ascertain something of the nature of the inland country but the wretched condition of his vessels and his continued indisposition forced him to abandon further investigation and sail to Hispaniola. Upon this voyage he discovered the island of Margarita, which has become so famous for its pearl fisheries.

Worn out with illness and the incessant strain upon him, he at last reached the colony, to take a long rest from his cares and troubles.

Chapter XIII

*Wretched Condition of the Colony — Vasco da Gama Sails
around the Cape of Good Hope to the East Indies —
Ojeda's Undertaking — Cabral Discovers Brazil*

THE time for rest and recovery had not yet come for poor Columbus. Unforeseen blows, new difficulties, new anxieties, new labors and dangers, so great that they would have tested the endurance of a well man and exhausted any man not worn down with trouble, were awaiting him. His noble brother, Bartolomeo, during his absence had conducted an expedition to a favorable and not far distant region and had begun the erection of a new city, which he named San Domingo in honor of his father, Dominico. This city, which still flourishes, has been for a long time one of the most important in the West Indies and the whole island has gradually come to take its name. While laying out the new city, Bartolomeo, with a part of his men, advanced into parts of the island where Columbus had never been, leaving behind him the captain-general Roldan in command of those remaining. This evil-disposed man betrayed the confidence reposed in him and proved himself guilty of blackest ingratitude.

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Roldan had long waited an opportunity to overthrow the Columbus family and make himself ruler of the island. The departure of Bartolomeo and the absence of his great brother seemed to offer just that opportunity. He improved it to the utmost of his ability, sought to turn the Spaniards left behind against Bartolomeo and his younger brother, Diego, and succeeded so well that most of them came over to his side. They chose him for their leader, took up arms against the *adelantado*, his plan being to seize all the supplies and take the fort at San Domingo by storm. This plan, however, was fortunately thwarted by the vigilance of some of the officers who had been left to protect the fort, and the leaders were forced to retreat to another part of the island. There they strove to win the natives to their side and so far succeeded that in a short time the whole island was in the throes of revolution.

Such was the desperate condition of the spot where Columbus had planned to rest! Still further to aggravate his troubles, he learned that the three vessels sent by him with supplies from the Canaries had not arrived. It seemed certain to him that they had been lost by some disaster or another upon the ocean. For a time everything seemed as good as hopeless for Columbus. Storms and ocean currents had driven these vessels out of their prescribed course and, after being tossed about in unknown regions of the ocean, they at last reached Hispaniola, but upon that coast

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where Roldan and his followers had settled. The cunning Roldan concealed his seditious undertaking from the captains of the three vessels and induced them to send a part of their crews on shore, whom he agreed to conduct to San Domingo. These men, the offscourings of the Spanish prisons, gladly enlisted under his banner, as it would give them a chance to rob and plunder. This was the first unpleasant result of the course which Columbus had inconsiderately taken.

Several days after the Admiral's arrival the three vessels appeared at San Domingo but without bringing the men he so much needed. Most of them had gone and most of the supplies had been consumed. Roldan, the ingrate, chuckled over Columbus' weakness and boasted of his own authority. Columbus' soul was filled with deep and bitter indignation. He magnanimously decided, however, not to pay any attention to the injury done him but rather to arrange an interview and see if the thankless Roldan and his erring followers could not be induced through kindness to return to their duties. To accomplish this he announced that all who were sorry for their offences should be forgiven as soon as they returned to their allegiance. Besides this he made the same promise to Roldan and assured him he should be restored to his former dignity. By this kindly condescension and after many urgent communications, he carried out his purpose and had the satisfaction of quelling this

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dangerous outbreak without shedding a drop of blood.

Thereupon he sent a vessel to Spain to inform the Court of his discovery of the mainland and of his suppression of the uprising, with the evidences of the products which he had found there, consisting of pearls, gold, and a great quantity of many-colored cloths, besides finely woven fabrics. He sent his diary, in which he had kept the course of his vessels and all the important events which had occurred. Roldan, on the contrary, as well as his accomplices, did not fail to send information to the King of a nature to calumniate the Admiral and to justify his own shameless conduct. Unfortunately the King was unjust enough to put more credence in his statements than in those of the brave Admiral, notwithstanding the one uttered the truth and the other shameful calumnies.

In the meantime the King of Portugal, deeply regretting that he had so mistaken Columbus and rejected his proposals, resolved to spare no cost in discovering the long-sought passage to the East Indies. To retrieve his mistake he fitted out an expedition and entrusted its command to the skilful and experienced mariner, Vasco da Gama.

Difficulties which appeared insurmountable confronted this undertaking, but fortunately Da Gama had the same stamp of greatness as Columbus. No difficulties, however great, could deter him from the execution of a purpose once formed. It mattered not

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to him that the African coasts were unknown, that they abounded in rocks and sand bars, that the sun beat down with heat so fierce as to threaten the burning of the vessels, that storms raged and menaced them. He met all these obstacles with an unconquerable spirit, kept resolutely on, and at last reached the southernmost point of Africa, the Cape of Good Hope. That was only the starting-point for such an ambitious spirit as Vasco da Gama. He pushed farther ahead, sailed around to the other side of Africa, and at last reached the city of Melinda, upon the coast of Zanzibar. He was greatly surprised to find, in place of barbarians such as he had encountered all along the African coast, a highly civilized nation resembling in some respects the Asiatics. They carried on an extensive trade with foreigners, were Mohammedan in religion, and were acquainted with many of the arts of civilization. Eager to accomplish the real purpose of his expedition, he still sailed on and, on the twentieth of May, 1498, had the good fortune to reach the coast of India. He landed at the city of Calicut, in the Malabar district, on the Indian Ocean. He was no more surprised at the richness of the country and the value of its products than at its orderly administration and the polished manners of its people. Unfortunately he had nothing on his vessel which he could exchange for these valuable products, for the mere trifles which the savages prized so highly were of little account to these peo-

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ple. He did not remain there long, therefore, but turned back to inform the King of the fortunate outcome of his undertaking.

Thus, at about the same time Columbus discovered the New World, another world, though known already, but of little practical advantage, was brought into close communication with Europe by navigation. From this time on wealth poured in great streams into little Portugal. It was not without envy that the Spaniards observed the rich treasure their neighbors were enjoying while they had not yet been able to pay the expenses of discovering their new possessions. The enthusiasm for making discoveries now spread more and more. Kings and republicans, nobles and burghers sought to make fortunes, to fit out expeditions, and gain adventures either for themselves or others. Among these the chevalier Ojeda, who had accompanied Columbus on his second voyage, persuaded some merchants of Seville to equip four vessels and despatch them on voyages of discovery under his command. He obtained permission to make these voyages, and a contract which violated the provisions of the one which the Court had made with Columbus. The Bishop of Badajos, who, as Prime Minister, had charge of all West Indian affairs, was a sworn enemy of Columbus and took advantage of his sickness to give Ojeda his diary and charts, to be used on the voyage. This Ojeda was accompanied by a well-known Italian nobleman, Amerigo

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Vespucci, or, in Latin, Americus Vespucius. With the help of the diary of Columbus, Ojeda reached the island of Trinidad, and, after many adventures, arrived at Hispaniola, where he made common cause with Roldan, but returned to Spain after he had been betrayed by him. Ojeda's voyage, though it was of little importance, brings Americus Vespucius into notice. In what capacity he accompanied Ojeda is not clear. He himself maintains he made the voyage in the service of the Crown. In his description of it he is not always truthful. He overestimates his own importance, and yet it is evident from his writings that he was very fond of adventure and natural beauty. Americus Vespucius did not propose that the newly discovered country should be named for him. He was not so foolish as that. The name was first given to it after his death, because it was first made well known in his writings.

Realizing the important gains to be made from the passage discovered by Da Gama, the King of Portugal fitted out a great fleet which was loaded with European goods with which to carry on a lucrative business, and a man named Cabral was appointed its commander. As he knew how unsafe it was to sail along the African coast, he steered, as soon as he was on the other side of the equator, to the west, and, after keeping in that direction for some time, suddenly and much to his astonishment found himself on the coast of a great country. By accident

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he had discovered the rich Brazil. He took possession of it in the name of the King and sent one of his vessels back with the agreeable news. In this way was one part of America after another discovered, demonstrating more and more how correct were the grounds upon which Columbus' conjectures rested.

Chapter XIV

Columbus Again Calumniated at the Spanish Court — Bobadilla is Ordered to San Domingo on a Tour of Investigation — He Sends Columbus Back to Spain in Fetters — Columbus Vindicated by his Sovereigns — Ovando Sails to the New Countries with a Fleet of Thirty-two Vessels

ROLDAN and his followers did everything in their power to escape responsibility for the disorder which had occurred and fasten the blame upon Columbus. At the same time many malcontents returned to Spain angry because, in place of the riches they had expected, they had encountered only hardships and poverty. All of these people regarded Columbus as the sole cause of their blasted hopes, and accusations and curses were heaped upon him all over Spain. Encouraged by his powerful enemies, they overwhelmed the King and Queen with petitions for compensation for their losses and with complaints of the injustice and oppression they alleged they had suffered from him. Their ragged attire and pale, famished appearance aroused sympathy for them and lent their statements the appearance of truth. Whenever the King and Queen appeared in public a swarm of these

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unfortunates, instigated by the Admiral's enemies, surrounded them, implored the royal mercy, and inveighed against Columbus. Is it surprising that a naturally credulous and suspicious King at last believed their accusations? Is it surprising also that the Queen herself, who had hitherto been Columbus' steadfast patron, at last took sides against him?

Owing to the pressure brought upon them, Ferdinand and Isabella decided to send a commissioner to the West Indies with authority to investigate the Admiral's administration. Francisco de Bobadilla was the man proposed by the enemies of Columbus, and he obtained the important position. He had full authority to remove Columbus and in his heart was determined to do so. He also received permission, as soon as he was convinced the charges were true, not only to remove him but to undertake the government of the island himself. He further was conceded authority to take possession of all the defences, vessels, storehouses, and property of every kind, to fill all positions, and to send back to Spain, for appearance before their sovereign, all persons, without regard to rank, whose dismissal would in his opinion help to restore order in the island. Unfortunately Bobadilla was a man completely unfitted for such a task. He seems to have been a weak, presumptuous person, puffed up with insolence by the brief authority which had been so undeservedly conferred upon him. He regarded Columbus from that time forward as a convicted

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malefactor. At the time this direful messenger was selected Columbus had succeeded in his efforts to restore peace and order in all the island districts. The discontented were satisfied, all Spaniards and natives had obediently submitted to the laws, the rich mines were opened, and the development of the country had begun auspiciously.

When Bobadilla arrived at San Domingo, Columbus was still absent in a distant part of the island, seeing that some of his instructions were carried out. A sense of justice should have led his judge to await his return before taking action against him. But what did such a man as Bobadilla care about justice? He had not come to hear Columbus' explanations but to condemn him and usurp his place. As soon as he landed he went directly to the house of the Admiral and announced that it was his own from that time forward. Then he took possession of all his belongings. After doing this he publicly announced that the King had sent him to depose the governor, and to settle all grievances which any person had against him. Not satisfied with this, he at once released all whom Columbus had arrested and invited them to make complaints of the injustice they had suffered.

Having done this, the infamous Bobadilla sent a messenger to Columbus with the order to appear immediately before his tribunal and give an account of his conduct. At the same time he sent him a royal document showing that he had full authority

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for his order. A bolt out of the clear sky could not have astonished Columbus more than this unexpected news. He could not trust his own eyes but read the document over and over again — a document black with infamy — but he could not make it other than it was. He, the acknowledged discoverer of the New World, guilty of no offence, was ordered to appear before the tribunal by a worthless man not fit to lick the dust from his feet! Columbus was crushed down under the weight of this outrage. But he did not hesitate an instant as to his duty. He had soldiers and his brother Bartolomeo with him and it would have been easy to answer this unjust judge, sword in hand. But his noble spirit despised any method of protecting himself which was not consistent with the obedience which he considered due to his superiors, though they were guilty of an atrocious act of injustice. He hesitated not an instant but went to San Domingo without a murmur, honorably to accept the penalty. Having arrived, he waited upon Bobadilla. "Place him in chains," said the tyrant, without assigning any reason, "and take him away." The inhuman order was executed. Columbus was fettered and taken to a vessel in haste. Thus was a man rewarded, for whom, if he had lived in the days of the old Greeks and Romans, statues would have been erected, divine honors awarded, and temples built.

Thus was Columbus degraded, and in this shameful manner he was removed from a country which he

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had secured for his King at the cost of a thousand hardships and at great personal danger. He received this last hard blow of adverse fate with quiet dignity and with a calmness which declared his innocence and greatness of spirit more eloquently than any apology he could have uttered. He was hurried away; but the cup of his sorrows was not yet emptied. His patience was to be put to a still severer test, for Bobadilla had not yet exhausted the full measure of his cruelty. He realized that his noble prisoner would only half suffer so long as he knew that he was the only victim and that his brothers were still free. He placed them also in chains and specially ordered that they should have no communication with each other. Then he went through the pretence of a trial and sentenced them to death, but he had not the courage to carry out his murderous purpose, for he feared he might not be able to justify himself. He hoped that his powerful friend, the Bishop of Badajos, Columbus' deadly enemy, would see that the death sentence was executed. To this end he sent a report of the proceedings to Spain with the prisoners.

Hardly was the vessel under way which was taking Columbus to Spain when the captain, who still retained his respect for him, approached him to remove the fetters, but Columbus refused to have them taken off. "Let them remain," he said, "I am wearing these fetters by the orders of my superiors; I will continue to wear them until they

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remove them; they will find me obedient now as I always have been." So the fetters remained until he reached Spain. Bobadilla had ordered that the prisoners upon arrival should be delivered to the Bishop of Badajos, so that they should have no opportunity to secure the sympathy of their patron, Queen Isabella. But an honorable man, named Martin, secretly left the vessel and carried a letter from Columbus to the Queen informing her of what had happened. The Court was astounded at the news, for it had never expected that Bobadilla would so far exceed the authority vested in him. They recognized the indignity of this treatment and foresaw that it would shock all Europe. A messenger was sent at once with the command that Columbus and his brothers should be released. At the same time he was requested to appear at Court and money was sent him so that he might be suitably clothed and present himself in a manner befitting his rank. Columbus acceded to the request of the royal pair and waited upon them. Entering the apartment in which they were awaiting him, he prostrated himself before them. He was so overcome with the monstrous injustice he had suffered that it was a long time before he could speak. At last he recovered himself, strengthened by his consciousness of innocence, and protested against the slanders of his malicious enemies. He made a long explanation in which he so completely established his innocence that Ferdinand and Isabella were entirely convinced

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by it. They expressed their regret for what had occurred and assured him that it had been done without their knowledge. To confirm this assurance, they removed Bobadilla from his position and made reparation to Columbus by marks of affection and promises of future protection. When a little later it became necessary to choose a successor to Bobadilla, it was unmistakably apparent that the prejudice of the King and Queen against Columbus was not entirely eradicated, for Nicolás de Ovando was chosen. He was given a fleet of thirty-two vessels, a company of two thousand five hundred persons—many of them from distinguished families—and, besides this, everything that was necessary for the maintenance and prosperity of the colony. It was in vain that Columbus appealed for the rights which had been granted to him at the beginning of his great undertaking. It was in vain that he protested against this fresh injustice of removing him from his position after he had been pronounced innocent, as if he were a convicted criminal. His protests met with evasive replies, or remained unnoticed. He felt the deepest indignation and could not conceal it. Wherever he went he took his fetters as an evidence of the black ingratitude with which his services had been requited. He kept them hanging in his rooms and ordered that they should be buried in the grave with him.

Chapter XV

Ovando Calls the Audacious Bobadilla to Account — Columbus Undertakes his Fourth Voyage in 1502

NEVER had so strong a fleet been sent to the West Indies as that consigned to Ovando, the new governor. While he was sailing away with his thirty-two vessels and two thousand five hundred men, Columbus had to remain at home with the mortification of seeing another reap what he had sown with so many inexpressible hardships. Soon after Ovando's departure a terrible storm arose which dispersed his vessels. The news reached Spain that the fleet was lost. The King, overcome with distress at this new misfortune which had consigned so many of his best and bravest subjects to a watery grave, secluded himself in his palace several days. Fortunately, however, the report proved untrue. The fleet outrode the storm. Only one vessel was lost and the others reached their destination at the right time.

Ovando arrived at Hispaniola just at the right time. Had he been delayed longer the new colony might have been ruined by Bobadilla's foolish and unjust administration. He had hoped to establish himself in secure possession by pandering to the

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rabble in every unlawful way. To accomplish this end he revoked all of Columbus' wise regulations and permitted every one to conduct himself in the most unlicensed manner. His predecessor had striven to protect the poor Indians from Spanish outrages, but he left them exposed to violence of every kind. He divided them among his covetous followers as slaves and the poor creatures were assigned to tasks far beyond their strength. The burden of this labor and the cruel severity which they had to endure at the hands of their taskmasters killed many of these naturally weak creatures and threatened to destroy them all.

The first act of Ovando was the removal of Bobadilla, who was sent to Spain, together with Roldan, to give an account of his misconduct. By royal command he did away with slavery by declaring all the Indians free. The unlicensed manner of life followed by the Spaniards was checked by new and rigid laws. Permission was given for the mining of gold but upon condition that half the product should belong to the King or the master of the island.

Meanwhile Columbus, bowed down by the weight of his troubles, appeared from time to time at the Court, which continued to turn a deaf ear to his complaints. He did not plead for grace but for justice. With the royal contract in his hands, he implored the fulfilment of the promise made to him that he should be the vice-sovereign of the newly discovered regions.

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He was convinced that on his last voyage he had found the coast of the mainland. His former supposition that this land was a part of India, if not entirely removed, was greatly weakened. He now conjectured that between the mainland and India there might be a great ocean separating one from the other. He further thought it possible that in the region of the Isthmus of Darien there might be a strait through which a passage could be found into this ocean and thence to the Indies.

It seemed to him a matter of the highest importance to ascertain whether there was such a passage. If so, how much easier and more direct it would be to sail for the Indies in that direction than by the passage discovered by the Portuguese around Africa! Great as was the injury done to him by the King, his desire to benefit the world by fresh discoveries was still greater, greater even than his indignation at being superseded and refused his rights. He magnanimously resolved to forget all that had been done to him and in his old age to risk once more the dangers and hardships of a new voyage. He announced his purpose to the Court, which was only too delighted at the opportunity of ridding itself of his troublesome presence. The sight of this deserving and greatly maligned man was a daily reproach to the King and Queen and they were only too glad to be free from it. Hence they willingly accepted his offer. They also cherished a belief that his voyage might have fortunate results

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for them. The order to fit out an expedition was promptly issued.

What an apology for a fleet! Four wretched little vessels, the largest of which was not half as large as an ordinary freight vessel, constituted all the material entrusted to him for so great an undertaking. With this little fleet he must navigate a far-distant unknown ocean and find a way to those East Indies from which he had promised to bring rich treasures. What a wretched outfit for the accomplishment of so vast an undertaking! Any other man would have abandoned such a seemingly impossible project, but Columbus thought of his first voyage and had no hesitation in trusting his life this time to vessels as weak as those were with which he first crossed the ocean between Europe and the West Indies. He went on board courageously, accompanied by his brother Bartolomeo and his thirteen-year-old second son, Ferdinand, who afterward wrote the history of his life.

On the ninth of May, 1502, ten years after his first voyage, the gray-haired navigator set sail from Cadiz and steered for the Canary Islands. The voyage thus far was very fortunate, except that one of his vessels, the largest one, was such a slow sailer that it was very difficult to keep up with the others. He therefore first directed his course to Hispaniola that he might exchange this useless vessel for another. As soon as he reached the island he sent a messenger to Ovando, acquainting

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him with the reasons for his arrival and asking permission to enter the harbor. The governor, however, did not believe he had the right to grant this request as a different course had been laid out for him, and he had been forbidden to go to Hispaniola. So the Admiral had to submit to a humiliation which he must have expected. Notwithstanding his indignation he called the attention of Ovando to the fact, of which he was certain from long experience, that a violent storm was approaching. He begged for permission therefore to enter the harbor and remain there until the storm subsided. The governor at this time was about to send a considerable fleet to Spain. Columbus' proposal, however, was disregarded. His petition was rejected, his advice spurned, and his warning was laughed at as the fancy of a conceited, knavish weather prophet. Meanwhile the Spanish homeward-bound fleet set sail.

But the Heavens avenged the slight which had been put upon Columbus. The storm which he had foreseen came in all its fury. Columbus saved himself by keeping close in to shore and his vessels escaped. Ovando's richly laden fleet, however, on its way to Spain, became the prey of the storm. Roldan and Bobadilla paid the penalty of their treachery to Columbus and perished in the waters. When the Admiral learned later that they were among the drowned, he had no doubt that an overruling Power had thus punished these traitors. With righteous indignation Columbus left the

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island, which he had discovered and which had been refused him as a shelter from a terrible storm, and sailed westward for the mainland. He was beset by many dangers on this voyage but finally had the good fortune to reach an island called Guanaja, lying not far from the main coast of Honduras. As soon as he had come to anchor he sent his brother Bartolomeo with some armed men ashore to make investigations. As Bartolomeo approached the beach he met a large Indian boat much more skilfully built than any he had ever seen before in that region. It was of considerable length, eight feet wide, and covered in the middle with a roof of palm leaves which gave it the appearance of a large gondola. The wives and children of the Indians were on board, besides twenty-five men. As soon as they were overtaken they gave themselves up as prisoners, without resistance, although they were armed. Their cargo was examined and found to consist of woollen stuffs, some pieces of clothing, and great bands of cloth which served as draperies for the women, large wooden swords sharpened on both sides, besides copper hatchets and some other articles made of metal. Their food was of the same kind as that in Hispaniola except that they had a drink made of maize, resembling beer, and a small stock of cocoa beans of which they were very fond and which also served for money. These were the first beans of the kind ever seen by Europeans. Another remarkable thing about these savages was

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the modest manner in which they attired themselves.

The Admiral was delighted to have these natives in his power, as he hoped to learn from them much that he wished to know. He treated them generously, exchanged European articles for their own, and gave them to understand they could go back with their boat whenever it pleased them. One old man, who seemed to be the most distinguished among them, remained on board a long time and much useful knowledge was gained from him which was of service in further communications with the natives.

Columbus learned from this old man that there was a great region farther to the west which produced gold in abundance. The people in that region wore golden circlets on their heads and heavy gold rings on their fingers, arms, and ankles. They had tables, chairs, and chests of gold; and corals, spices, and other valuable articles could be found there in great quantities. This region was no other than the rich Mexico. But great as was the Admiral's desire to secure these treasures, his desire to effect the purpose of his voyage by discovering the straits, which he hoped to find not far away, was still greater. After much consideration he abandoned the idea of obtaining these treasures which he was assured were so near. Without paying heed to the complaints of his companions he directed his course along the shore of the mainland toward the east.

Chapter XVI

Columbus Vainly Attempts to Find the Passage between the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans

IN pursuance of his plan Columbus sailed from the coast of Honduras to the eastward, hoping to find the straits which the natives assured him were in that direction. On their eastern journey along the coast they saw men who were very different from those they had met before and at the same time more uncivilized. They went entirely naked, ate raw meat and fish, and their ears were distended even to their shoulders by the many things they wore in them. They were tattooed with pictures of deer, lions, and other animals all over their bodies. The most important of the natives were distinguished from the others by white and red head coverings of woollen stuff. Some were black, others red, and still others painted their lips, nostrils, and eyes with stripes of various colors.

From there he sailed farther on, making, however, but a short distance each day as the wind was almost continually contrary and he was greatly troubled by the currents. At last he reached a cape, stretching toward the south, and there the wind was so favorable that he coasted along without difficulty.

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Columbus, who never was lacking in gratitude toward the only Source of all good, named this cape *Gracias á Dios*, or "Thanks to God." In one place where they lay at anchor for several days they encountered boats filled with armed savages who looked as if they intended to prevent them from making a landing. As soon as they were convinced, however, of the friendly intentions of the Spaniards, they approached with the utmost confidence and offered to sell their weapons of various kinds, cross-bows, canes of a black hardwood—tipped with fish bone,—clubs, waistcoats of wool, and little pieces of pale gold which they wore on their necks. The Admiral presented them with various European playthings without taking anything for them. This seemed to dissatisfy them and when the Spaniards also declined their repeated invitation to go ashore they regarded it as a sign of mistrust. For this reason they shortly sent an old man of distinguished appearance, accompanied by two young maidens wearing gold necklaces, as ambassadors to the Spaniards. The old man appeared with a banner in his hand, which doubtless was a flag of truce, and desired to be conducted to the Admiral. Columbus received them courteously, provided them with food and clothing, and sent them back to shore delighted with their friendly treatment.

On the next day Columbus' brother went ashore and saw all the presents which had been given to the natives lying in a heap, probably because it

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was not their custom to accept gifts without making gifts in return. As he landed, two of the foremost natives took him by the arms and requested him to sit between them on the grass. He did as they wished, asked them various questions with the help of an interpreter, and ordered his secretary to take down their answers in writing. Hardly had the savages noticed pen, paper, and ink before they sprang up excitedly and ran up to their fellows who were looking on near by. The poor superstitious people fancied that the secretary was a magician, that the writing materials were the instruments of his magic, and that he would do them harm. Every effort was made to convince them of their folly but they would not venture to come near the Spaniards until they had averted the danger in their peculiar way, which was as follows: They threw a kind of powder at them which gave out a smoke, and this smoke, which they probably believed had the power of averting magic, they managed so that it should touch the one whom they regarded as the master magician. Immediately after this Bartolomeo went with them to their village. The most remarkable thing he saw was a large wooden structure which served as a burial-place. He found several corpses in it wrapped in woollen cloths, one of which was embalmed. Upon each one of the graves there was a board upon which were figures of animals. Upon some there were likenesses of the deceased, ornamented in various ways. On the next

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day the Admiral detained several natives on board in order to obtain further information from them, which led the others to believe that he intended to keep them until they were ransomed. Accordingly they sent messengers to him with two young wild hogs as a ransom for the prisoners. The Admiral sought to make them understand their comrades were not prisoners and that a ransom was not necessary. He bought the hogs from them, whereupon they returned contented.

After another cruise of several days the Admiral reached the mouth of a stream, came to anchor, and sent a boat's crew ashore, but a multitude of armed natives resisted their landing. Over a hundred sprang waist deep into the water, threateningly brandished their lances, blew horns, beat a kind of drum, dashed water at the Spaniards, and spit at them as a sign of their contempt and aversion. The Spaniards had orders to maintain a friendly attitude toward them. They made no reply to the hostile actions of the natives but contented themselves with watching the spectacle at a safe distance until the leaders were weary of their useless operations, when, in place of a battle, communication was opened up with them, and an exchange of several little trifles was made for sixteen plates of gold, valued at one hundred and fifty ducats.

On the next day the natives changed their views of the peaceful attitude of the Spaniards toward them. They attributed it to cowardice and even

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went so far with their audacity as to hurl their spears at the approaching boats. Finding it necessary to give them a lesson they could understand, a cannon was fired and at the same time one of the savages was wounded by an arrow, which created a panic among them. The Spaniards availed themselves of the opportunity to land without inflicting further injury upon the fugitives. They made signals to them in the hope of inducing them to return. As the natives were now convinced that the white strangers would not harm them, they came back, laid down their arms, and exchanged their gold quietly and peacefully.

After learning the nature of the region and its products the Admiral continued his course along the coast, still hoping to find the straits. On this voyage he at last came to a gulf with a spacious and secure harbor. The natives there had built an apparently large town, which was densely populated and surrounded by well-cultivated land. Columbus named this place Porto Bello on account of its beautiful harbor. The natives were universally friendly and brought fine-spun cloths, besides all kinds of food, which they gladly exchanged for nails, needles, and bells, and other similar trifles. From there Columbus sailed eight miles farther to that region where now is the city of Nombre de Dios. As the stormy weather compelled him to remain there several days he spent the time in repairing his vessels, which had now become badly damaged.

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After this he resumed his voyage but bad weather forced him to run into a little harbor which he named the "Refuge." The natives there were also very friendly at first but the insulting behavior of a sailor provoked them to hostility. Confiding in their numbers, they made a concerted attack and attempted to board the vessels. The Admiral tried to induce them to abandon their purpose but, as his good offices were of no avail, he had a cannon fired in hopes that its mere noise would intimidate them. He was mistaken, however. When the natives saw that no damage was done, they became even bolder and replied to the cannon with shouts of derision. Seeing that it was necessary to make some impression upon them and show them what the cannon could do, he had a large one heavily loaded and aimed at a hill where a multitude of the natives were collected. The ball flew through the crowd. They saw to their dismay that the thunder could also hit and they fled in consternation into the woods. These natives were the handsomest he had yet seen. They were slim, had well-shaped limbs, and none of them the protruding paunches which were common among the savages. The harbor was filled with large alligators which used to come down to the shore to sleep. These animals gave out an aroma which filled the air. Although they seemed to be timid, they would strive, when attacked, to seize and devour their assailant.

At last Columbus began to despair of finding the

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passage between the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. As he was also threatened by furious storm winds he decided to turn back, and sailed to a spot which he called Veragua and in which, according to the natives, there were rich gold mines. A terrible storm, which lasted several days, and the rapid diminishing of his supplies made this short voyage one of his most troublesome and dangerous. The entire supply of food which remained, after being at sea eight months, consisted of some poor remnants of ship biscuit which had become so tainted by the hot, damp weather of the region that it was unfit to eat. Notwithstanding this, the disgusting stuff was eagerly devoured, but those eating it would go off into dark corners so as not to see what they were putting into their mouths. In this wretched plight they looked askance at the great number of sharks swimming around the vessels. The superstitious followers of Columbus regarded these monsters as signs of misfortune. But in spite of their superstitious fears and in spite of the disgust which Europeans have for such oily flesh, these famished people devoured shark meat with still greater zest because it tasted better than maggoty biscuit.

Chapter XVII

Columbus Abandons the Hope of Discovering a Passage to the Pacific and Returns to Jamaica, where his Vessels are Exposed to Great Danger — Two Boats are Sent to Haiti for Help

BEFORE Columbus could reach the gold region of Veragua he was forced by a gale to come to anchor for a shorter or longer time at different places to weather the storms. At one of these places he beheld a curious sight. The natives did not live on the ground like other people but in houses in the air, built among the branches of trees. In reality it seemed as if they lived like the birds. They chose this mode of living to protect themselves from floods, wild animals, and their enemies. They reached their habitations by ladders and, once they were at home, drew them up, so that all access to them was cut off.

At last they reached Veragua, with expectations of rich booty, and came to anchor at the mouth of a river which Columbus named Belen. They shortly became acquainted with some of the natives and, learning from them that at the distance of a few days' journey up the stream there was the city of a prince named Quibia, Columbus determined to sail

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up the river. Having done so, he sent his brother, Bartolomeo, ashore to give this Indian prince a fitting welcome. He had already been informed of the arrival of the whites, came to meet Bartolomeo, and they greeted one another with becoming friendliness. On the next day the prince visited the Admiral, who received him in a manner befitting his rank, and speedily made him his friend by a gift of some European trifles.

Bartolomeo in the meantime had made careful inquiries about the gold mines and, learning their whereabouts, went to them. When the Spaniards reached the spot they found some pure gold lying at the roots of a tree, which was considered a sure sign that there must be an abundance of the metal in the soil. After picking up the pieces lying about they returned, bringing the news of their fortunate discovery to the Admiral, who at once decided to establish a colony there and ordered the erection of houses at the mouth of the river Belen. Work was begun enthusiastically and in a short time wooden houses, covered with palm leaves, were built. Columbus selected eighty men for colonists and made his brother Bartolomeo their leader. They were provided with all the tools and materials necessary to make life comfortable and safe. He also left much fishing tackle with them as the waters in that region abounded in excellent fish. Among others there was a kind of anchovy, which the natives caught in a curious way. These fish when they were

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pursued by others would leap out of the water upon the dry land. The Indians would cover their canoes with a great quantity of palm leaves and row about the river splashing their oars, and the fish, mistaking the foliage on the canoes for land, would spring into them, where they were captured.

When all his arrangements had been completed and the Admiral was ready to make his return voyage to Spain, he learned to his great surprise that Prince Quibia, jealous at the settlement of Europeans in his country, had planned to fire the houses of the colonists. He counselled with his brother how to prevent this calamity, and both decided that it was absolutely necessary to get the start of him by seizing the Prince in person. Bartolomeo undertook to carry out their plan. Accompanied by a strong force, he marched directly to the city of Veragua, where the Prince's dwelling stood upon a solitary eminence. When they had reached it Quibia requested Bartolomeo not to come to his house as he would come out to meet them. Bartolomeo took only five men with him and ordered the rest to follow at a little distance and, as soon as he gave the signal with a musket shot, to rush forward and seize the house and allow no one to escape. The Prince came forward but at the very instant he was about to receive his guest he found himself a prisoner. Thereupon the signal was given, the Spaniards surrounded the house, and all who were in it were taken prisoners without resistance. This deed was

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accomplished quickly, but a new succession of reverses began for Columbus, which lasted to the end of his life.

The Prince was taken to the vessel, bound hand and foot. It was night when the boat was pushed off. The prisoner, who was fastened to it by ropes, complained of severe pain in his hands because they were tied too tightly. His humane captors loosened the rope but kept hold of it. Waiting his opportunity the Prince suddenly jumped overboard. They attempted in vain to drag him out again. His dexterity in swimming and the darkness of the night enabled him to escape. Quibia at once laid his plans to take a terrible revenge. He attacked the colony before it was aware by stealing through the dense forests with his men. They rushed on with wild cries and poured a shower of burning arrows upon the palm leaf roofs of the new houses, hoping to pierce and burn them. The distance, however, was too great. Thereupon ensued a desperate struggle which would have resulted in the destruction of the colony if it had not been saved by the courage of Bartolomeo, who charged into the very midst of the enemy with a few men so furiously that at last they gave way after some had been killed and some wounded. Among the latter was Bartolomeo himself, who was wounded in the breast by an arrow, but not fatally. They hoped that the Prince would be deterred by this victory from further acts of hostility but they were dis-

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appointed. He sought revenge more furiously than ever and undoubtedly the colony would have been the victim of his wrath had not the colonists, who clearly saw the danger enveloping them, decided to trust themselves to the mercy of the waves on the worm-eaten, crazy vessels rather than expose themselves daily to the fury of the savages. The Admiral, when informed of their decision, realized that it was necessary, and took them on board his vessels in canoes lashed together.

There was no resort left for the Admiral except to reach Hispaniola with his crazy vessels, for it was impossible to go to Spain with them, but the elements seemed to be in a conspiracy to thwart his purpose. A fearful hurricane and thunder storm swept the ocean to its very depths and hurled the vessels about so violently that the crews lost all courage. Vainly Columbus sought to apply all those precautionary measures which experience had taught him. They did not listen to his commands and even if they had listened they were too terrified, confused, and exhausted to execute them. One of his vessels was lost as it approached the coast of the mainland and the others leaked so badly that the united exertions of all on board barely availed to keep them from sinking. In these desperate conditions Columbus steered for Cuba, hoping that he might be able to make the necessary repairs there. But this hope was denied him. A new and terrible storm drove him from the coast with irresist-

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ible fury out to sea and dashed the two vessels together so violently that all thought their last moment had come. But Providence preserved Columbus' life. His virtue was yet to be tried by harder tests. The joints of his vessels withstood the strain and, in the meantime having reached the coast of Jamaica, he ran them ashore to prevent them from sinking. Then he rescued himself and his companions by stranding them. Repairing them was no longer to be thought of for they were utterly worthless. It was fortunate from the Admiral's point of view that they were not destroyed, as he had two reasons for preferring that he and his companions should live upon the wrecks rather than ashore. In the first place they would be more secure from attack by the natives than on land, and in the second place he could prevent them from acts of hostility caused by the outrages of his own people. He propped up the stranded vessels as securely as he could, roofed over the decks, and forbade his men to go ashore.

The natives soon discovered the vessels and in pursuance of the orders of Columbus were greeted in a friendly manner. The result was that they also displayed a friendly spirit and brought a profusion of articles of food to exchange for the trifles which the Spaniards always carried. They willingly exchanged two geese for a bit of tinsel, a loaf of their bread for a glass bead, and for bells the most valuable things they had for barter. Columbus in the

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meantime counselled with his friends as to the best way of leaving the island. Only one course seemed feasible and that was to request the governor of Hispaniola to send a vessel to take them off. Then the question arose how to get in communication with him. They had not a single boat left and Hispaniola was thirty miles distant from Jamaica. At last a way was found. By his humane and friendly attitude toward the natives Columbus so ingratiated himself that they were willing to sell him one or more of their canoes. They were wretched affairs, hardly deserving the name of boat, for they were hollowed out of tree trunks and were shapeless, poorly made things which they could hardly row ashore. The least gust of wind would upset them and the smallest waves wash over them.

But notwithstanding the danger to life which seemed inevitable in undertaking a long sea journey in one of these wretched affairs, two daring men were found in Columbus' crew willing to risk their lives in an effort to rescue the Admiral and his men. One was named Mendez, the other Fiesko; the one a Spaniard, the other a Genoese. Each had a canoe of his own, and was accompanied by six Spaniards and some natives who were to do the rowing. It was arranged that as soon as they were fortunate enough to reach Hispaniola, Fiesko should return and inform the Admiral, while Mendez should go to San Domingo and execute the duty assigned him by Columbus. The daring navigators sailed away

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accompanied by the blessings and good wishes of their companions left behind. After they had been rowing continuously for two days and nights, exposed to intolerable heat, they began to fear that they had lost their way and were going by Hispaniola out into the open ocean. Their distress was great for their stock of water was exhausted and they were suffering horribly from heat, thirst, and exhaustion. Some of the natives dropped dead at their oars and all the others dreaded a similar fate. The only restorative they had was sea-water held in the mouth to cool the tongue.

At last their dreadful condition was relieved by a ray of hope. It was night and, as the moon rose above the horizon, they observed at the place of its rising an elevation which they recognized as a cliff. This raised their hopes that they were near an island and encouraged them to attempt rowing to it with all their strength. When they reached it they found only a barren rock upon which apparently there was neither food nor drink. But they jumped out of the canoes and wandered despairingly about the rocky islet. In the clefts of the rocks they found an abundant store of rain-water which was as pure and clear as the water of a cistern. Unfortunately in their joy at finding this treasure they forgot the wise rule of moderation. They drank, and drank too much. Some of them paid the penalty with their lives, others with impaired health.

The most pressing necessity of our adventurers

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having been removed, a still more serious question presented itself. What was to be done next? Fortunately they found upon the shore of the island some fish washed up by the sea, and as these sufficed for their immediate wants, both the leaders decided to remain in the desolate place during the heat of the day and start away again toward evening in their search for land. As soon as evening came the unfortunates resumed their course, rowing all night by moonlight. At daybreak — to their unspeakable joy — they reached the west coast of Hispaniola.

Chapter XVIII

Conspiracy against Columbus at Jamaica — He Returns to Spain and Vainly Seeks Reinstatement — He Dies at Valladolid in 1506

DAY after day the companions of Columbus watched the region whence Fiesko was to come with the news that Mendez had made a landing at Hispaniola, but they watched in vain. Fiesko did not appear. Thereupon they became desperate. They were sure both the adventurers had been lost and all hope of release from the island vanished. The air was filled with their complaints and these complaints at last changed to open revolt. They shrieked, cursed, and threatened the life of Columbus, and the dark hour seemed to have come when the great leader, who had overcome so many dangers, should fall a victim to their blind rage. Columbus was confined to his bed with a painful ailment, a large part of his crew were in a similar plight. Those who were on their feet had submitted themselves to the leadership of two brothers, named Porras. The oldest of these, an unfeeling wretch, approached the Admiral's bed and savagely demanded to know why he did not go back to Spain. Columbus replied with his customary composure

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that he had no way of returning, much as he wished to do so; if any one of his men could show him the way to do it, he would gladly go. Gracious as his answer was, it made not the slightest impression upon the shameless Porras. He replied even more ferociously that it was no time for pretences. For his part he was going to sail. Thereupon he shouted to the assembled crowd: "Those who wish to follow me, step forward." His words were the sign for a universal uprising on the vessel. Most of them at once declared that they were ready to follow him. The Admiral, suffering as he was with the torments of gout, sprang from his bed to calm the disturbance, but his attendants who were justly afraid he would be murdered, restrained him. The mutineers gave way and retired when his brother, Bartolomeo, rushed into their midst, pike in hand, to punish them for their treachery. The leaders of the revolt in the meantime seized ten small craft which the Admiral had secured from the natives and sprang into them. This caused the others who had taken no part in the uprising to waver in their loyalty and most of them got into the boats and asked to be taken with them. It was with the deepest concern that Columbus, his brother, Bartolomeo, and his son Ferdinand watched this distressing spectacle. The poor bedridden invalid saw himself deserted by almost all his crew. The few faithful attendants gathered around his bed and engaged in excited discussion, while he thanked them for their proof

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of loyalty and encouraged them to remain steadfast in their duties and to look for a speedy termination of their present wretched condition, assuring them that in the future their honesty and loyalty would be rewarded.

The unfeeling mutineers in the meantime rowed with exultant shouts to the eastern point of the island, thence passing over to Hispaniola. When they went ashore they plundered and outraged the natives and shamelessly advised them to hold the Admiral responsible, as he was the sole cause of their trouble. If they could get no indemnity from him, they had their permission to kill him. It was his intention to make them all suffer and if they were smart they would get ahead of him. This greatly embittered the Indians against their treacherous leaders. Next they forced a large number of Indians, whom they had made prisoners, to go on board and do the rowing.

They had hardly gone four miles after this when a furious wind arose and made the sea so rough that their small craft began to fill with water. In order to lighten them, the wretches determined to murder the Indians and throw them overboard. Some of them had already been killed when the others, growing desperate, flung themselves into the water and imploring mercy swam along near the canoes. But with unheard-of cruelty, whenever they became exhausted and to rest themselves would cling for a little while to the canoes, these

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European monsters would push them off and inhumanly leave them to die. No less than eighteen were thus sacrificed, and the same dreadful fate would have overtaken all of them had not the Spaniards doubted the possibility of reaching Jamaica without the help of the few remaining.

Columbus in the meantime bore his great trouble with his customary resolution and, sick as he was, looked after the other invalids with the tenderness of a father. Heaven blessed his generous solicitude and sympathy and in a short time the old man had the pleasure of seeing all of them restored to health. But now he had to contend with a new danger. The Indians, who had supplied him with provisions up to that time, began to fear that these voracious Europeans would stay there forever and consume everything they could produce. This fear and the outrages from which they had suffered at the hands of the mutineers prejudiced them against the whites, and the result was they stopped bringing supplies to the vessels. Columbus, however, found a way of surmounting this difficulty, for which he was indebted to his knowledge of astronomy. He foresaw that an eclipse of the moon was at hand and he made use of this knowledge to arouse anew the respect and hospitality of the natives. With the help of one of the natives of Hispaniola he summoned the headmen by the announcement that he had something of great importance to communicate to them. When they appeared, he told them through an Indian

interpreter that he and his companions were people who knew the God that made the heavens and the earth. This God, who protected the good and punished the bad, would also punish them if they refused any longer to supply food. As a sign of the punishment hanging over them, the moon the next night would wear a red and wrathful face, showing them what trouble they would bring upon themselves if they longer refused to be hospitable to their guests. At first they laughed at the prophecy, but when the moon began to grow dark and the darkness increased, there was universal consternation among them. With shrieks and howls they implored the Admiral to pray to his God that He would not punish them, sacredly promising to supply him with everything necessary to life. Columbus agreed to do as they wished and shut himself up in his cabin for the moment, knowing that the darkness would soon disappear. Then he reappeared and adjured the natives not to be troubled. God, he said, saw with great pleasure that their sentiments had changed. He therefore would not punish them and, as a sign of His graciousness, the moon would lose its angry appearance and soon shine upon them with its friendly beams. When this prophecy had been fulfilled they praised the Christian God in their joyous surprise and generously provided the wonderful man, who had foretold all this, with everything he needed.

Eight long dreary months had passed since Mendez and Fiesko had left for Hispaniola and

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nothing had been heard of them. There was not the least doubt they had perished and the companions of Columbus gave up all hope of the expected assistance. In despair they contemplated deserting their leader and joining the mutineers who were roaming about the island and living upon their plunder. Just as they were about carrying out their purpose, to their great surprise a European vessel was seen lying at anchor not far from shore. It did not remain there long before its captain came to the Admiral in a boat and gave him a letter from the governor, together with a cask of wine and two sides of bacon. Hardly had he done this when he sprang back into his boat, rowed to his vessel, and sailed away. The letter which he brought contained nothing more than some empty words.

Ovando, the governor of Hispaniola, was anxious that Columbus should miserably perish, for he feared that the discoverer, if he returned to Spain, might establish his rights and cause him to lose his position. He wished to know, therefore, just how great the necessities of this man were, whom he desired out of his way, and whether he could accomplish his infamous purpose if he delayed sending a vessel to him for a long time. This was the malicious reason, as some of the historians maintain, for sending his representative with orders to observe the condition of Columbus' affairs and then sail away again. Others give a more inoffensive reason. Ovando, they say, feared that Columbus was using the

stranding of his vessels as a pretext for coming to Hispaniola with a good grace and then securing the sovereignty by force. It was on this account that he had sent a spy to ascertain whether the affairs of the Admiral were such as had been described. Columbus informed his men that the vessel had sailed away because it was too small to take them and their belongings, that Mendez and Fiesko had fortunately arrived at Hispaniola and had orders to buy a larger vessel upon his account, which would soon come to their relief. In reality he had received no news of the fate of either of them.

Notwithstanding the fact that the brave Fiesko had been prostrated with a fever contracted on the rocky island, true to his promise, he was anxious to return to the Admiral and bring him news of the fortunate outcome of their voyage. But not one of his companions could be induced to make that perilous voyage again. Neither promises nor threats were of any avail and he found himself forced to go to San Domingo against his will. There he and Mendez repeatedly implored the governor to let them buy a vessel for the relief of their leader, but the governor managed in various ways to protract the business so that he might carry out his own designs. Meanwhile Columbus had made many fruitless attempts to bring the rebels back to their allegiance. They not only persisted in their disloyalty but they demanded that the Admiral should give them half of all the clothing and other articles on the stranded

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vessels. If he refused to do this they threatened to take them by force. When the refusal was actually made they prepared to execute their threat.

As Columbus was still sick he sent his brother Bartolomeo with an armed force to meet them. He had orders to use his good offices and not to begin hostilities until all other means were exhausted. Bartolomeo carried out the order, but when he approached in a friendly way and invited them to make peace they took it as a confession of weakness and the battle began. Six of them had planned to attack Bartolomeo and not to give up until they saw him fall. But Bartolomeo met them fearlessly and, as he was faithfully supported by his little following, he charged upon the rebels with such resistless force that in a short time he won a complete victory. Several were put to the sword, others were taken prisoners, and the rest escaped by flight. Among the prisoners who were taken back to the vessels in chains was Porras, the leader of the rebels, whom Bartolomeo had caught and disarmed with his own hands. He himself received a wound in the hand. Shortly after this the fugitives sent to the Admiral messages imploring his mercy, and the magnanimous man, who was always more inclined to forgiveness than revenge, at once granted their prayer. At last order was restored. Every one returned to duty, every one was forgiven, and only the audacious leader of the mutiny remained in chains as a fitting punishment.

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Mendez and Fiesko meanwhile had unceasingly striven to induce the governor of Hispaniola to allow them the privilege of buying a vessel with which to fetch away Columbus and his people from Jamaica. He hesitated long before granting this reasonable request but, at last, fearing they might apply to the Spanish Court if he persisted in leaving the Admiral helpless, he consented. Thus was Columbus relieved and at a time when everything looked hopeless. After spending a whole year in the struggle with poverty and calamity, the vessel arrived. All embarked joyfully June 28, 1504, and sailed to San Domingo which they reached August 13. The governor, concealing his real sentiments under the cloak of pretension and flattery, ordered Columbus to be received with all honor. At the same time, however, when this coward, because of his fears, was pretending to honor Columbus, he was secretly venting his spite against him in various malicious ways. He particularly arranged that the leader of the mutineers, who was to be taken to Spain in chains, should bring a suit for his immediate release, and at the same time threatened to bring proceedings against those who remained faithful to Columbus. The Admiral, who had borne many an injury at the hands of this unscrupulous man with patience, felt strong enough to endure this last outrage also. But he made all possible haste to leave a country whose discovery had been his misfortune, and as soon as a second vessel had been fitted out he sailed

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for Spain, September 12, 1504. The same adverse fate which had followed him so persistently on his previous voyage overtook him on this last one. A furious storm was so disastrous to one of his vessels that he had to send it back to Hispaniola. The other was so badly damaged that it was doubtful whether it could accomplish the journey. Besides other mishaps it lost its fore and mainmasts. Columbus nevertheless kept on his course undauntedly. With his half-wrecked vessel he traversed seven hundred miles of the ocean and finally reached, though with extreme difficulty, the harbor of St. Lucas, in Andalusia, early in November in the year 1504. He had spent only a few days in Spain, recovering from the fatigue of his journey, when the news of a mournful event reached him. His patroness and only protector, Isabella, died November 26, 1504. He had looked to her as his last and only reliance in obtaining his rights. Now she was gone! What could he expect from the prejudiced King, who had always shown himself inimical to him?

Nevertheless, as soon as his health was in some measure restored, he hastened to the Court to make a report of all that had occurred. But he was coolly received. His just complaints of the many injuries he had suffered from his enemies were not listened to, and his reasonable request that his rights should be restored to him was evaded by shallow pretexts. Thus was this great and well-

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deserving man condemned to devote the evening of his life to the business of vainly trying to obtain justice from an unjust judge and mercy from a merciless King. Heaven at last put an end to his long and bitter suffering. Exhausted by the trials and hardships he had undergone, he died at Valladolid on Ascension Day, May 20, 1506, his last words being, "Into Thy hands, O Lord, I commit my spirit." His death was worthy of his life. He died with a peaceful spirit and with that trust in God which had characterized him during his whole life, even when it was darkest. His joyful soul hastened to that judgment-seat before which even Kings must appear. His earthly remains were at first deposited in the monastery of St. Francis in Valladolid and six years later were taken to the Carthusian monastery at Seville, where King Ferdinand erected a costly memorial to the discoverer. From this place the body was removed in 1536 to the island of San Domingo, the scene of his principal discoveries, and upon the cession of that island to the French it was taken to Cuba where the ashes rest in the cathedral of its capital. Near the high altar of this splendid structure his bust stands in a niche, and close by it is a silver urn which contains all that is left of the renowned explorer.

In person Columbus was tall and shapely. His appearance was distinguished. He had a long face, aquiline nose, soft blue eyes, and a very fair complexion. In his youth his hair was auburn but,

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owing to his many hardships and severe labors, it grew white early, for his life was a continual alternation from fortune to misfortune, from calumny to laudation, from the highest expressions of honor to the lowest degradations. Few and fleeting were his hours of pleasure, for hardly a day passed that he was not called upon to contend with physical pain or troublesome mishaps or aggravating injuries. Otherwise he was strong in his bodily constitution and was very powerful and agile. He had a pleasing and attractive manner and was friendly and modest with every one. He was courteous to strangers, affable to his attendants, merry with his good friends and, what was especially characteristic of him, in almost every situation of life he conducted himself in a manner that commanded admiration. He lived moderately, dressed modestly, and whenever in his various expeditions he was overtaken by adverse circumstances, he allowed himself no comforts which were not shared by his companions. In his youth he devoted himself industriously to the sciences, in which he excelled the average scholars of his time. But what is most worthy of commendation was the quiet, sincere piety which he manifested upon every occasion. He was inclined to anger, but he so far overcame this passion with the principles of his religion that he could display an admirable gentleness and patience when exposed to the coarse assaults of his unworthy adversaries.

Such was the man who was so grossly mistaken

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and misjudged by his contemporaries but whose name is immortal and must ever arouse love and admiration in the hearts of all who prize the nobility of virtue and human greatness.

Chapter XIX

Diego, Columbus' Son, Secures the Rights coming to him from his Father — The Spaniards Extend their Authority in Central America and Rule Cruelly — Ponce de Leon's Discovery of Florida

DIEGO, Columbus' eldest son, after the death of his great father, urged the demand for the fulfilment of the contract made by the King, by virtue of which the government of the West Indies was vested in his family for all time, but it was all in vain. Ferdinand displayed the same prejudice and injustice to the son that he had to the father. All Diego's representations and appeals for justice were disregarded. At last he ventured to appeal from the King to the judge whose duty it was to investigate and settle all questions pertaining to America. To the everlasting glory of this tribunal be it said that the judge had the courage to decide against the King and in favor of the heirs of Columbus, and to declare that Diego must have the rights which were denied his father. Notwithstanding this, in all likelihood the King would have paid little attention to the decision had it not been that Diego brought strong influence to bear upon him. Elevated in rank by the decision of the

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highest court in the Spanish kingdom, he asked for the hand of the daughter of one of the most distinguished men in the country, niece of a Duke of Alva, and no objection was offered. This powerful family urged the King so persistently and emphatically to carry out his contract that he at last surrendered and conceded Diego's claims. Ovando was recalled and the Columbus family, victorious over jealousy and injustice, embarked for Hispaniola.

Accompanied by his brother, his uncle, and his wife, Diego sailed for Hispaniola with almost kingly pomp, and lived there in all the splendor which was due to the great service his father had rendered Spain. A great number of persons of rank followed him there. In a short time the colony presented an entirely different aspect and many of the most flourishing and distinguished families in Spanish America are descendants of those who accompanied Diego.

During Ovando's administration a certain Juan Ponce¹ sought permission to establish a colony upon the island of Porto Rico, discovered by Columbus, and his request was granted. He sailed thither, accompanied by many adventurers, hoping to secure great treasures, as the island was reported to be rich in gold. The natives resembled those of Hispaniola in their good nature and faithfulness. They received the whites in the most cordial manner,

¹ Ponce de Leon, born in Arragon in 1460, a Spanish soldier, conqueror of Porto Rico and discoverer of Florida.

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regarding them as celestial beings, and one of their caciques, after the custom of the Indians, named himself Juan Ponce Agueynaba, after the Spanish leader, as a mark of eternal friendship. But these greatly honored celestial friends soon threw off their masks and showed themselves so cruel and inhuman that the natives discovered they were only men. To make sure that they were really mortal, the leaders of these unfortunate people decided to make the trial as thoroughly as possible with one individual. With this purpose in view they waited an opportunity and soon found one.

A young Spaniard, wandering about the island and feeling himself absolutely secure, came to the cabin of one of the headmen among the natives to spend the night with him. He was graciously received and hospitably entertained. The next morning his host assigned some Indians to accompany him, partly to carry his bundles, and partly to act as guides. They had been instructed in the meantime what to do. Coming to a river, one of the Indians offered to carry the Spaniard across and took him upon his back. When they were in the middle of the stream he intentionally fell, managing to submerge the Spaniard. With the help of his companions the Indian kept the victim under water until he was drowned. Then they dragged his body ashore. But their conviction of the immortality of the Spaniards was so strong that they were not even then certain the young Spaniard was

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actually dead. Although the dead man gave no sign of life they remained by him three days, unceasingly praying for pardon, because they still feared that he might come to life again. At last, when convinced he was actually dead, they hastened to bring the joyful news to the cacique that the white men were mortal and could die. He did not need to know more. He conveyed the news to the other caciques and they at once courageously determined to get rid of their tyrants by force. But what could a naked, unwarlike people accomplish against trained warriors armed with swords and muskets and provided with horses and hounds? They had a great advantage in point of numbers, for over a hundred of them could surround and murder one Spaniard, but they paid the penalty for it with the loss of their freedom and happiness, for when the Spaniards discovered their plan of killing them individually, Ponce massed his warriors, who were mostly veterans, hunted the Indians in their hiding-places, slew them wherever he found them, and made slaves of those who were not killed. While engaged in this murderous business, reinforcements came from Hispaniola which impressed the superstitious islanders with the belief that the dead Spaniards had come to life again and that it was of no use longer to contend against those who could not die. Victims of their own ignorance, they bowed their necks under the hard yoke of slavery which was now mercilessly put upon them.

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In their accounts of the Porto Rico slaughtering the historians of the time cannot sufficiently praise the cunning and courage of a great hound, named Bezerillo, and the astonishing deeds he performed. He knew, they said, how to distinguish the Indian friends and enemies of his masters. The Indians were more afraid of ten Spaniards with this dog than of a hundred without him. Before the outbreak they used to give the Spaniards all the provisions, gold, and even slaves they asked for to save themselves from being harmed by the dog. The following story of his cunning is also told: Some inhuman Spaniards took delight in tormenting an old Indian woman whom they disliked. Upon one occasion they sent her off with a letter. She had hardly set out before Bezerillo was let loose to run her down. He fiercely pursued her but the woman threw herself upon her knees, showed the dog the letter, and said: "O, gracious Sir Hound! I pray your grace, spare me! I must deliver this letter to the Christians!" The dog, as if he clearly understood her, wagged his tail and trotted back to his masters without doing her any harm.

The happiness of these poor natives was gone forever. The discoveries and conquests of the Spaniards rapidly increased. The first step which Diego took for the extension of his sway and the increase of the royal possessions was the founding of a colony on the island of Cubagua, discovered by his father, to engage in pearl fisheries. These

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pearls grow in certain mussels and oysters, not only in the sea but also in rivers, and have to be taken from the bottom. Some think that they come from a disease of the shellfish, but this much is certain, that the material of the pearls at first is a juice which comes from the body of the fish and gradually hardens. The pearl-fishers, who are mostly poor men, dive into the water and bring them up. Diego conceived that the work of these Indians, who were used to swimming and diving, could be more profitably employed in this manner than in mining. He sent a number of them with the necessary European overseers to Cubagua, where his father had found that the waters abounded in pearls. The profits of the fisheries both for the King and the governor were exceedingly large, but the unfortunate natives employed in the fishing found the work so unhealthy and dangerous that most of them were lost. The general barrenness of the island soon compelled the colony to leave and settle in the adjacent island of Margarita.

About this time Diego took possession of the island of Jamaica. A colony was established and the natives soon found themselves destined to the same fate which had overtaken their brethren in Hispaniola and Porto Rico. Next in order came Cuba. Diego assigned its conquest to Velasquez,¹ a man who had made himself famous on various occasions during the lifetime of Columbus. A large number

¹ Velasquez accompanied Columbus to Española in 1493.

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of people who hoped to make their fortunes accompanied him and a landing was made at the eastern point of the island. This region at that time was ruled by a cacique named Hatuey who had escaped from slavery in Hispaniola and settled there. A sworn enemy of the oppressors of his people, he had long expected a visit from them and had arranged with spies in Hispaniola to send him early news of their movements. He now saw the dreaded calamity at his doors. He summoned his followers, announced the danger which threatened them, and encouraged them to maintain their liberty to the last drop of their blood. All courageously agreed to follow him.

"This is well," replied Hatuey, "but one thing more is necessary, my good people, if our efforts to save ourselves from the tyrants are to be successful. Do you know why they never come here to look for their God among us? Do you know who their God is? See him here! This is he!"

As he said this he showed them a basket of gold, and assured them this worthless metal was their God, for whom they were venturing everything and seeking to hold possession of the island. "Let us hasten," he said, "to celebrate this deity of the Christians and secure His protection." Then in the Indian fashion they began singing and dancing around the basket. The festivity was kept up until late into the night and did not cease until the entire company had succumbed to weariness and exhaus-

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tion. On the next day Hatuey summoned them together again and told them that, notwithstanding the honors they had paid to this deity, he was not sure they would be safe so long as He remained on the island. "It is useless," he exclaimed, "to hide Him. If you should swallow Him they would cut you to pieces to find Him in your insides. So let us throw Him into the sea so that He shall be no longer upon our island." His advice was promptly followed. They gathered all the gold they could find and threw it into the ocean.

Notwithstanding this action the Spanish flags were soon waving on their shores. Hatuey courageously hastened to meet the foe. A battle ensued. The natives were soon beaten and put to flight. Hatuey himself was taken prisoner and, as a terrible example to other caciques, was sentenced to be burned alive. As he was standing at a pile of fagots, bound to a stake, a Franciscan approached to describe heaven to him, the place of the blessed after death.

"Do the Spaniards also go to this blessed place?" inquired Hatuey.

"Certainly," replied the monk; "but only the good ones."

"That is good for nothing," answered Hatuey, "I will go to no place where I shall be in danger of meeting one of them."

This dreadful act of barbarity inspired the natives all over Cuba with such fear that they no longer thought of resistance but willingly subjected them-

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selves to the Spanish yoke. Thus in a few days the Spaniards conquered one of the greatest and most beautiful islands in the world without losing a man. About this time various expeditions were sent out to the mainland and preparations were made to establish colonies and subject the natives.

Ponce, the conqueror of Porto Rico, heard from several natives a story that was commonly believed by those simple people. According to this story there was an island toward the north and a wonderful fountain upon it whose water had the remarkable effect of making the person who drank it young and strong again. Absurd as the story was, it so excited the curiosity of the credulous Ponce that he determined to search for the wonderful fountain.

With this purpose in view he set sail from Porto Rico, directing his course northward toward the Lucayan Islands. After reaching the twenty-sixth degree of north latitude he changed his course to the west and found to his great delight a large, beautiful country, which we now know to have been a part of North America, to which Ponce afterward gave the name of Florida, either because it had such a blooming appearance or because its discovery was made at the season which is known as Easter day, or, as it is called in Spanish, "*Pascua florida*," or "*Flowery Easter*." Thus a very silly story led to a most important discovery.

The attention of the Spaniards was shortly directed to another part of the world, which had

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hitherto been entirely unknown to them. They conjectured the existence of a country in the same latitude as that of the great rich Mexico, but no one had yet tried to find it.

The famous man who opened up this country to Europeans was Cortes.

Appendix

The following is a chronological statement of the principal events treated of in this volume:

- (?)1436 Birth of Columbus.
- 1470 Columbus arrives at Lisbon.
- 1484 Columbus goes to Spain.
- 1490 His scheme rejected.
- 1492 Agreement signed with Ferdinand.
- 1492 Discovery of America.
- 1493 Columbus returns to Spain.
- 1493 Second voyage.
- 1495 Investigation of his administration.
- 1496 Returns to Spain.
- 1498 Third voyage.
- 1500 Bobadilla sent to the West Indies.
- 1500 Columbus sent to Spain in chains.
- 1502 Ovando appointed governor of Hispaniola.
- 1502 Fourth voyage.
- 1504 Returns to Spain.
- 1506 Death of Columbus.

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